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Chaos continues as 50 flights get bomb threats

2 flights diverted; Centre mulls steps to ban perpetrators

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

At least 50 flights operated by Indian airlines received bomb threats and two of them were diverted on Sunday, according to sources.

In 14 days, more than 350 flights operated by the Indian carriers have received hoax bomb threats. Most of the threats were issued through social media.

Akasa Air on Sunday said 15 of its flights got security alerts and after thorough inspections, all aircraft were released for operations.

The sources in the know said IndiGo received threats for 18 flights and Vistara for 17 flights.

At least two IndiGo flights were diverted following threats. Its flight 6E 133 (Pune to Jodhpur) was diverted to Ahmedabad and 6E 87 (Kozhikode to Dammam) was diverted to Mumbai, an official said.

According to an IndiGo statement, the flights that received security-related alerts include 6E 11 (Delhi-Istanbul), 6E 92 (Jeddah-Mumbai), 6E 112 (Goa-Ahmedabad), 6E 125 (Bengaluru-Jharsuguda), 6E 127 (Amritsar-Ahmedabad) and 6E 135 (Kolkata-Pune).

The sources in the know said IndiGo received threats for 18 flights and Vistara for 17 flights
PHOTO: PTI

Among others are 6E 149 (Hyderabad to Bagdogra), 6E 173 (Delhi to Bengaluru), 6E 175 (Bengaluru to Delhi), 6E 197 (Raipur to Hyderabad), 6E 248 (Mumbai to Kolkata), 6E 277 (Ahmedabad-Lucknow), 6E 312 (Bengaluru to Kolkata), 6E 235 (Kolkata-Bengaluru) and 6E 74 (Riyadh-Mumbai).

Union Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu on Sunday said the Centre is mulling steps to ban perpetrators, who resort to hoax bomb threats, from flying.

The minister also said besides taking support from international agencies, law enforcement wings and the Intelligence Bureau to prevent these fake threats, the union government is also mulling to amend two Civil Aviation Laws. Naidu further said an investigation into these fake threats is going and also the cooperation of X is being sought.Against the backdrop of a spate of hoax bomb threats to airlines, the IT Ministry has asked social media platforms to observe due diligence obligations and promptly remove or disable access to misinformation within the strict timelines prescribed under IT rules. *—PTI*

B'luru-Delhi Akasa flight gets threat

Gorakhpur, 27 Oct

A bomb threat on Sunday was reported on an Akasa Air flight, enroute from Bengaluru to Delhi via Gorakhpur, which was found hoax after inspection. During a thorough inspection at the Gorakhpur airport, no suspicious item was found, Gorakhpur Airport director RK Parasher said. The flight landed in Gorakhpur at 1.33pm and the door opened at 1.50pm. The inspection of the aircraft continued till 2.42 pm and the flight took off at 3:43 pm for Delhi, Parasher said. *—PTI*

'MANN KI BAAT'

Awareness key in dealing with digital arrests: PM

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday flagged the issue of fraudsters targeting people with the cybercrime of 'digital arrests' and urged people to adopt the mantra of "stop, think and take action" when faced with such a scam, asserting that these steps will provide digital security to them.

In his monthly 'Mann ki Baat' broadcast, he said probe agencies are working with states to deal with the issue but added that awareness is essential in protecting oneself from this crime.

During his broadcast, he also shared a conversation between a victim and a fraudster to highlight the cybercrime of digital arrest.

"The fraudsters of digital arrest phone calls, at times, impersonate as police, CBI, Narcotics; at times RBI... using such various labels, they converse as fake officers with a lot of confidence. Many listeners of 'Mann Ki Baat' have wished that we must discuss that," he said.

Explaining the modus operandi of such fraudsters, he said they collect personal information as their first move and then in their second move create an atmosphere of fear. He said the third move of such fraudsters is the pressure of time.

The gang of criminals and those who are doing this are enemies of society, Modi said.

Indian cyber-security agency CERT-In on Sunday shared a list that talks about more than a dozen ways in which online scams are being perpetrated by fraudsters in the country, including "digital arrest" to dupe people by stealing their money and private data.

Narendra Modi ***PHOTO: PTI***

3 STEPS TO DIGITAL SECURITY

STOP: As soon as you get a call, stop. Don't panic, stay calm, don't take any hasty steps, take a screenshot and record it for sure

THINK: No government agency threatens you on the phone. If you feel scared, then know that something is wrong.

TAKE ACTION: Dial the national cyber helpline 1930, report on cybercrime.gov.in, inform family and police, and preserve evidence.

The advisory suggested a host of best practices and counter-measures to stay vigilant against such crimes and not give into the "pressure tactics" deployed by cyber criminals, who seek quick action by creating "a sense of urgency". *—PTI*

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PHOTO: X @FCBARCELONA

Lewandowski double helps Barca demolish Madrid

BARCELONA, 27 OCT

Robert Lewandowski scored twice and Lamine Yamal piled on to ruin Kylian Mbappé's first clasico as Barcelona routed Real Madrid 4-0. The lopsided victory in Spain's capital ended the host's unbeaten run in La Liga at 42 games, one shy of Barcelona's record streak in 2017-18. Carlo Ancelotti's side suffered its first loss since Sept. 23 last year. And what a loss it was. He got the visitors going from a superb pass by Barcelona's latest youth talent Marc Casadó in 54th minute and rose up to head in a fine to silence Bernabeu Stadium. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 8

Delhi air pollution worsens ahead of Deepavali

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

The air quality deteriorated in the national capital on Sunday, with the Air Quality Index (AQI) being recorded at 352, in the 'very poor' category, according to System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR). This is worse than the average AQI recorded at 255 on Saturday, categorized as 'poor'. Moreover, AQI in Anand Vihar area crossed the 400 mark, being recorded as 405 at 7am, categorised as 'severe', worse than AQI of 367 recorded on Saturday. *—PTI*

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People pay ₹20 per hour to charge phones in Odisha

BHADRAK, 27 OCT

People in many villages in Basudevpur block of Odisha's Bhadrak district are seen making beelines before vehicles carrying power generators to charge their mobile phone batteries as the electricity supply has been disrupted by cyclone Dana. People are forced to pay Rs 20 per hour for recharge of one mobile phone battery and Rs 300 to lift ground water to overhead tanks in houses, said Santilata Panda, sarpanch of Bishnupur panchayat of Bhadrak district. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

ACTOR TO POLITICIAN

Áctor and founder of Tamilaga Vetri Kazhagam Vijay waves at supporters during his pary's first political conference, at Vikravandi in Villupuram district, on Sunday ***PHOTO: PTI*** ***>>>MORE ON PAGE 3***

SHAH SLAMS TMC GOVT OVER 'INFILTRATION'

KOLKATA, 27 OCT

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday accused the TMC government in West Bengal of aiding "state-sponsored infiltration" and corruption, claiming that incidents of assault on women in Sandeshkhali and the rape and murder of a doctor at RG Kar Hospital are evidence that women are "not safe" in the state.

He also said that the "next big target" for BJP is winning the West Bengal assembly polls in 2026 with a two-third majority, asserting that this is the only way to address corruption and infiltration. *—PTI*

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39 Telangana special cops suspended for misconduct

HYDERABAD, 27 OCT

As many as 39 personnel of the Telangana Special Police (TGSP) have been suspended for alleged misconduct and incitement of agitation.

Some TGSP personnel (constables) held agitations inside the Battalion campus in Telangana as well as on the streets of several places, including Hyderabad, and the families of the constables held sporadic protests in the state, demanding uniform policies for all police personnel and better working conditions.

"With a view to upholding discipline and integrity within the Telangana Special Police, the 39 personnel involved in misconduct are placed under suspension for unbecoming of government servants, including incitement of others for agitation among Battalion personnel," a release from Telangana Police said.

The suspended personnel were found to have acted in violation of conduct rules and have engaged in behaviour contrary to the one expected from government servants and they allegedly instigated unrest within the Battalion, adversely affecting morale and operational efficiency, it said. Such actions not only undermine the disciplinary framework but also tarnish the image of the uniformed force dedicated to maintain peace and security in Telangana, the release said.

Senior officials were directed to closely monitor Battalion activities and ensure a positive working environment; the release added. . *—PTI*

Govt floats draft bill to amend arbitration law

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

Seeking to provide "further boost" to institutional arbitration and reduce court intervention in such cases, the government has come out with a draft bill seeking views on the proposed amendments.

According to the law ministry, "The aim and purpose is to provide further boost to institutional arbitration, reduce court intervention in arbitrations and ensuring timely conclusion of arbitration proceedings".

The draft bill comes months after an expert committee headed by former law secretary and former Lok Sabha secretary general TK Vishwanathan submitted its report.

The draft bill proposes the concept of 'emergency arbitration'. One of the clauses omitted relates to laying of notifications proposed issued, in both Houses of Parliament when it is in session. Addressing an event here last year, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar had lamented that retired judges have kept the arbitral system of the country in a tight fist grip, denying chance to other qualified minds. He said India is known for its rich human resources, but they are not picked up to adjudicate arbitral process. Successive government have been pushing to make India a hub of international arbitration on the lines of London and Singapore, with limited success. *—PTI*

FESTIVE RUSH

10 injured in Mumbai's rly station stampede

MUMBAI, 27 OCT

Chaos and cacophony reigned at Western Railway's heavily-patronised Bandra Terminus on Sunday morning after a mass of people tried to board a moving train to reach their native places for Diwali and Chhath. At least 10 people injured.

The incident took place around 2.45 am when passengers rushed to board the unreserved 22921 Bandra-Gorakhpur Antyodaya Express while it was moving into platform number 1 from Bandra Terminus yard.

While scheduled departure of the 22-coach train was at 5.10 am, officials said during such festival rush passengers often scurry to occupy seats as quickly as possible since there is no reservation.

Police personnel, passengers and others at Bandra railway station after a stampede ***PHOTO: PTI***

Videos that flooded social media since morning showed people running and shouting, and some passengers injured and bloodied. One video showed a man with blood oozing out of his wounds, while another injured passenger lay next to him. Shockingly, several people were seen boarding the compartment even as a passenger with a leg injury lay by the door.

Another video doing the rounds of social media showed a Railway Protection Force constable carrying an injured passenger on his shoulder, while another personnel was seen ferrying a passenger to the hospital in a makeshift cloth stretcher.

The injured people are Shabhir Abdul Rehman, 40, Parmeshwar Sukhdar Gupta, 28, Ravindra Harihar Chuma, 30, Ramsevak Ravindra Prasad Prajapati, 29, Sanjay Tilakram Kangay, 27, Divyanshu Yogendra Yadav, 18, Mohammad Shareef Shaikh, 25, Indrajith Sahani,19 and Noor Mohammad Shaikh, 18.

Police said Sahani and Shaikh condition is critical.

However, a statement from Western Railway said two persons were injured. *—PTI*

Cross-border racket busted, 105 kg heroin recovered

CHANDIGARH, 27 OCT

Punjab Police on Sunday said it has unearthed a cross-border smuggling racket with the recovery of 105 kg heroin and arrest of two associates of a foreign-based drug smuggler.

Punjab's Director General of Police, Gaurav Yadav said the water route was used to transport drugs from Pakistan and big rubber tubes of tyres have also been recovered Two associates of a foreign-based drug smuggler have been arrested and five foreign made and one country-made pistols have also been recovered, he said.

"@PunjabPoliceInd apprehends two associates of Foreign-based drug smuggler Navpreet Singh @ Nav Bhullar and recovers 105 Kg Heroin, 31.93 Kg Caffeine Anhydrous, 17 Kg DMR, 5 foreign made Pistols & 1 Desi Katta," Yadav posted.

Seized heroin ***PHOTO: X/@DGPPUNJABPOLICE***

"Water-route was used to transport drugs from #Pakistan, big rubber tubes of tyres have also been recovered, indicating that narcotic contrabands have been smuggled through water way," he said, while adding Navjot Singh and Lovepreet Kumar have been arrested. *—PTI*

Man held for flying drone over Vidhana Soudha

BENGALURU, 27 OCT

A 33-year-old man was arrested for allegedly flying a camera-fitted drone over Vidhana Soudha without permission, police said on Sunday. The police also seized the drone from the accused, Vinay, a resident of Upparahalli in Tumkur district. Vinay was arrested and interrogated based on a complaint filed by Head Constable Sivakumar, who was on patrol duty around 7:30 p.m. on Friday. In his complaint, Sivakumar claimed he heard a noise from the top of the building near the East Gate of Vidhana Soudha and discovered a small drone flying overhead. The drone was flying near the Vidhana Soudha Metro Station. It was immediately brought down, and the accused was handed over to Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) Subhash Chandra. Chandra told Salar News that Vinay had come to Bengaluru from Tumakuru for a pre-wedding video shoot. In his statement, the accused claimed he was recording a video of Vidhana Soudha to include in the shoot, ASI Chandra added. *—Salar News*

Farmer dies of electrocution in Mandya

MYSURU, 27 OCT

A 34-year-old farmer was electrocuted when he accidentally stepped on a snapped electric wire in the fields at Kotahalli in KR Pet taluk of Mandya district on Sunday. The deceased Harish was the resident of the Kotahalli village. Accusing Chamundeshwari Electricity Supply Corporation (CESC) of negligence for failing to replace the snapped electric wire, villagers protested in front of KR Pet taluk CESC office, demanding compensation for the deceased farmer. *—Salar News*

Man arrested for slashing wife's hand in B'luru

BENGALURU, 27 OCT

A man was arrested on Sunday for allegedly attacking his wife with a kitchen knife and grievously injuring her hand during a domestic dispute. The incident occurred around 10 pm on Saturday in Jaraganahalli, according to Puttenahalli police. According to the neighbours, the couple often quarrelled with each other. . On Saturday night, their argument took an ugly turn when the husband grabbed a knife and slashed his wife's hand. Following the incident, the neighbours rushed the woman to hospital and alerted the police control room (112). Later, the husband was taken into custody. An investigation is still underway, the police added. *—Salar News*

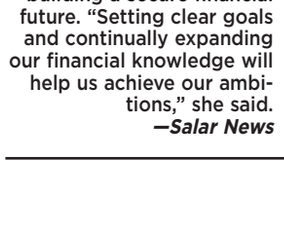


PHOTO: X

Finance officer guides scribes on investment

BENGALURU, 27 OCT

Commissioner of Industries and Commerce, Gunjan Krishna, emphasised the importance of strategic investing for a secure financial future at a financial literacy workshop for women journalists at the Bengaluru Press Club. "True saving isn't just about holding cash; it's about making smart investments across various sectors," she said, urging women especially to go beyond traditional cash savings. "A secure financial future calls for smart investments in areas like PPF, real estate, gold, stocks, mutual funds, and insurance," she added. She noted the lack of pension and job security in the media industry, stressing the importance of building a secure financial future. "Setting clear goals and continually expanding our financial knowledge will help us achieve our ambitions," she said. *—Salar News*

Confusion over ryot's land due to error: MB Patil

People were told to vacate ancestral land under Waqf Act

VIJAYAPURA, 27 OCT

MB Patil PHOTO: X

- Honavad villagers were agitated when they got notices that all of their land belonged to Waqf. They protested at the Deputy Commissioner's office in Vijayapura on Saturday

Industries Minister MB Patil on Sunday said notices were served to people of Honavad village in the district, under the Waqf Act, to vacate their ancestral land, following an error in the old gazette notification.

He said that the Karnataka Waqf Board cannot claim rights over 1,200 acres of farmers' lands in the village.

"In 1974, in the Gazette notification it was written as Honavad village by mistake. The land there is basically a part of the Mahal Bagh survey numbers," Patil, who is Vijayapura district in charge nminister, told reporters.

In 1977, the Waqf Board rectified its documents, which made it clear that only 10 acres of cremation ground belongs to it.

"The remaining 1,200 acres of land (claimed to be of Waqf) belongs to the farmers. Hence, not a single inch of land belonging to the farmers is Waqf property, the Minister explained.

Patil said he would convene a meeting with the district, revenue department and Waqf board officials to sort it out.

The matter pertaining to 10 acres of cremation ground is also subjudice and people should wait for the outcome, he said adding the cremation ground is also a Panchayat property.

When the minister's attention was drawn towards the change in mutation in villages in Indi Taluk of Vijayapura, he said he was referring to Honavad village and not Indi.

Meanwhile, State BJP has constituted a five-member team to study and listen to the plight of farmers who were allegedly served notice.

The team comprises, MP Govind Karjol, MLAs Harish Poonja and Mahesh Tenginkai, former MLC Arun Shahapur and BJP Kisan Morcha state general secretary Kalmarudappa.

The team, however, did not have the Vijayapura BJP MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal.

According to a statement issued by BJP state president BY Vijayendra, the team will meet the affected farmers on 29 October.

Villagers of Honavad were agitated when they got notices that all of their land belonged to Waqf board.

They staged a demonstration at the Deputy Commissioner's office in Vijayapura on Saturday. *—PTI*

DEEPAVALI READY

A woman shops ahead of Deepavali in Malleshwaram, Bengaluru, on Sunday. Deepavali will be celebrated across the State on 31 October PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

13 two-wheelers gutted in City

BENGALURU, 27 OCT

At least 13 two-wheelers which were parked in the basement of an eatery in Ullal Main Road, were gutted in fire on Sunday around 3 am. The cause of the fire is suspected to be short-circuit in the electrical system of the building. The fire officials rushed to the spot and doused the fire. The Jnanabharati police have registered a case. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

IN DAKSHINA KANNADA

PHOTO: PIXABAY

121 pvt schools told to refund excess RTE reimbursement fees

MANGALURU, 27 OCT

- Resistance to the issue found more voice among schools in Mangaluru North, where administrators have submitted audited financial reports disputing the department's calculations

Education Department has directed 121 private English medium schools in Dakshina Kannada to refund excess fees claimed under the Right to Education (RTE) quota for the academic years 2013-2015. This action follows audit objections raised by the Deputy Director of Public Instruction (DDPI) in Hassan.

James Cutina, the Block Education Officer for Mangaluru South, confirmed that a meeting was held with representatives from over 52 schools in his area, where they were instructed to return the overpaid amounts. While some schools have begun to comply, others have raised concerns about discrepancies in the reimbursement process. One Principal noted that the government had set reimbursement rates at Rs 8,000 for pre-primary and Rs16,000 for primary students, but actual payments often fell short, averaging around Rs 5,000 and Rs 11,000, respectively.

Resistance to the issue found more voice among schools in Mangaluru North, where administrators have submitted audited financial reports disputing the department's calculations. According to K Ravindra Shetty, President of the Dakshina Kannada and Udupi Private English Medium Schools Association a few schools have issued refunds to avoid further complications.

Syprian Montheiro, Director of Public Instruction (Primary Education) said that Further instructions from the Commissioner for Public Instruction are expected as the initiative to reclaim excess reimbursements continues across the State. *—Salar News*

Manjula Patil; Shivaraj Patil PHOTO: SALAR

Couple arrested for extorting ex-minister

BENGALURU, 27 OCT

The Central Crime Branch (CCB) police have arrested a couple for allegedly attempting to blackmail and extort Rs 20 lakh from Malikayya Guttedar, a former Congress leader and minister.

The accused Manjula Patil,32, and Shivaraj Patil, 39, reportedly approached Ritesh Guttedar, a six-time former MLA for Afzalpur and son of Malikayya. Ritesh filed a complaint after receiving two extortion calls from Manjula, who claimed to be the district president of the Nalapad Brigade, a fans association of Mohammed Nalapad, President of the Karnataka Youth Congress.

Manjula said that Malikayya had sent her "abusive" messages and threatened to publicly share these messages on social media. She demanded Rs20 lakh to avoid legal action. The couple continued to harass Ritesh even after he agreed to pay which prompted him to report the matter to CCB.

The police set up a trap and arrested the couple near Garuda Mall in the City. Six android phones were found in their possession, containing private videos of at least eight individuals, including a former district panchayat member.

The couple has been charged under Section 308 (extortion) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, and the investigation is ongoing. *—Salar News*

DKS EXTENDS SUPPORT TO HALLIKARS

PANJIM, 27 OCT

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Sunday extended support for the Hallikar community. He said that the government stands with them and will consider their demands.

Speaking at a Hallikar community convention, he praised the Hallikars as "children of mother earth" and "descendants of Lord Krishna." This convention, led by KM Nagaraju, marks the first gathering of the community in 80 years. Shivakumar emphasised the government's commitment, stating, "The government is with the Hallikars."

"The Hallikars have a 1,200-year history and have long been protectors of cow. It is a positive sign to see the community come together after such a long period, and I hope they continue to organise and strengthen under Nagaraju's leadership." He said that Nagaraju is a prominent leader. Shivakumar recalled how former chief minister Veerappa Moily had once recommended Nagaraju for an MLC position, which Nagaraju ultimately declined, instead supporting Premachand Sagar. *—Salar News*

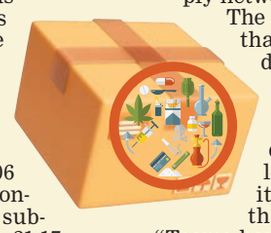
₹200cr drugs came through mail over 3 yrs

BENGALURU, 27 OCT

According to an investigation by the anti-narcotics wing of the Central Crime Branch (CCB) and customs officials' drugs valued at Rs 200 crore, which was seized over the past three years, were shipped to Bengaluru from foreign countries using postal services.

Authorities have also discovered evidence that the darknet is being used to procure significant quantities of drugs directly into the City. Officials suspect that local offenders are associated with the international drug peddlers helping them with the supply of narcotics in Bengaluru through post.

Recently, officials had raided the Foreign Post Office in Bengaluru, where they inspected suspicious parcels arriving from the US, Belgium, Thailand, the Netherlands, and the UK. Out of 3,500 parcels inspected, 606 were found to contain narcotic substances worth Rs 21.17 crore. The CCB and customs officials intensified their investigation to bust the drug trafficking network. Talking to Salar News, a senior official of CCB said that local drug peddlers were detained and interrogated, hence providing crucial information about the postal drug supply network.



The official added that local peddlers would contact dealers in countries where drug sales are legal to supply it to the City through post.

"Teams have been formed to trace the addresses listed on the parcels. However, most of the addresses are wrong and in some cases the individuals in question have relocated," the official said. *—Salar News*

Convention planned to support CM in Mysuru

MYSURU, 27 OCT

Members of various progressive, Dalit, and backward class organisations have announced plans to hold the Swabhimani Jan Andolan convention in November at the Maharaja College grounds in Mysuru to show their support for Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

This decision was made during a preliminary meeting at Yadava Community Hall,

attended by leaders from Mysuru, Chamarajanagar, Hassan, Kodagu, and Mandya.

Addressing the meeting, B Subramanya, former president of the Karnataka Pradesha Kurubara Sangha said that that the main goal of the convention is to expose what they describe as a conspiracy by JD(S)and BJP leaders to tarnish the image of Siddaramaiah. He emphasised that the government is supportive of the poor, women, farmers, and the Ahinda communities. The exact date and time will be announced later. *—Salar News*

FEAR 10-20% PRICE HIKE

Brewers urge State to withdraw draft notice

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

PHOTO: FREEPIK

The Beer Association of India (BAI) has urged the State government to withdraw draft notifications, which proposed a hike in duty through alcohol content-based classification in beer, saying that on average this move would lead to a price increase of 10-20 per cent in mainstream and premium segments.

The draft notification proposes to double the excise duty on strong beer to Rs 20 per bulk litre, increase the minimum billing price for beer in the state to Rs 300 per case and Additional Excise Duty (AED) to 195 per cent of the billing price or Rs 130 per bulk litre whichever is higher.

The industry body has also asked Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to withdraw the proposal asking beer manufacturers to declare the sugar content in the beer on the bottle's label and capping the use of sugar to 25 per cent of the weight of malt of grain.

BAI, which represents leading beer makers United Breweries, ABInBev and Carlsberg, said these draft notifications are not in the interest of any of the stakeholders and may result in high prices for consumers and impact the trade.

"The increase proposed in the draft notification would increase the prices by 10-20 per cent in mainstream and premium segments. At the same time, it would also make beer unaffordable to the masses with the proposed 35 per cent increase in taxes in this segment," said BAI, whose members account for 85 per cent of the beer sold in India.

The prices have been increased twice in last one year and. Karnataka is a very important market for the beer industry and it is recognised for its strong beer culture which has been made possible by progressive policies by the government. *—PTI*

Ambedkar a modern intellectual, says Belawadi

BENGALURU, 27 OCT

Prakash Belawadi PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Director Prakash Belawadi described Dr BR Ambedkar as a "modern intellectual" on Sunday. Speaking at a one-day workshop on Ambedkar's revolutionary thoughts, organized by the Youth Brigade at Ganabharathi Auditorium in Kuvempunagar, he noted that there are numerous historical references indicating that Ambedkar was insulted by secular leaders. He mentioned that Congress leaders did not allow Ambedkar to contest in the Rajya Sabha due to his caste and instead suggested he contest Rajya Sabha polls in different states.

He expressed that even today, people are afraid to speak about caste. The term "secularism" was incorporated into the Indian Constitution by the 42nd Amendment in 1976. Both Jawaharlal Nehru and Ambedkar, the chairman of the Indian Constitution drafting committee, opposed the inclusion of secularism in the Preamble of the Constitution, a historical fact that many people are unaware of. He emphasised that debates, criticisms, and discussions regarding caste and secular issues continue across the country.

Belawadi said that the word "secular" has a different meaning, sometimes described as "secret." *—Salar News*

NCP releases 3rd list for M'rashtra polls

Swara Bhaskar's husband Fahad Ahmad joins NCP (SP); Polls to be held on 20 November

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

Nationalist Congress Party (Ajit Pawar faction) on Sunday released their third list of candidates for the upcoming Maharashtra elections.

As per the list released, the new candidates are VijaySingh Pandit from the Gevrai constituency, Sachin Sudhakar Patil from the Phaltan, Dilipkaka Bankar from Niphad and Kashinath Daante from the Parner constituency.

On 25 October, NCP had announced it's second list for the upcoming elections.

Notably, Sana Malik, daughter of NCP leader Nawab Malik, will contest from the Anushakti Nagar constituency.

Zeeshan Siddiqui, who joined the NCP earlier in the day, has also been selected to run from Bandra East. After joining the party, Siddiqui said, "This is an emotional day for me and my family. I am thankful to Ajit Pawar, Praful Patel, and Sunil Tatkare for believing in me in these tough times. I have got the nomination from Vandre East; I am sure that with the love and support of all the people, I will definitely win Vandre East yet again."

Maharashtra Assembly elections are scheduled for 20 November, with counting for all 288 constituencies set for 23 November.

NCP (SP)'s Fahad Ahmad with Samajwadi Party leader & actor Swara Bhaskar **PHOTO: ANI**

Swara Bhaskar's husband Fahad joins NCP (SP)

Samajwadi Party leader and actor Swara Bhaskar's husband Fahad Ahmad joined Nationalist Congress Party (Sharad Chandra Pawar) on Sunday and was fielded from the Anushakti Nagar seat against Sana Malik of NCP (Ajit Pawar).

Speaking on his candidature from the Anushakti Nagar seat in the Maharashtra polls, Fahad said that he is thankful to NCP chief Sharad Pawar for asking SP chief Akhilesh Yadav that they want to announce his name as a candidate from NCP-SCP.

Congress on Sunday accused Mahayuti government in Maharashtra of using its stint in power to push corporate cronies' interests ahead of the well-being of the state's people and forests.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh alleged that in November 2023, a major advisor to Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL) was appointed to an Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) of the Centre that approves proposals for hydroelectricity projects, like those made by AGEL *—PTI*

Jharkhand polls: Women voters hold key in 32 seats

RANCHI, 27 OCT

Women voters may play a decisive role in 32 assembly constituencies, including the seats of Chief Minister Hemant Soren and former CM Champai Soren, as they outnumber male voters in the electoral roll.

Out of 32 constituencies where women voters are more than men, 26 are reserved for scheduled tribes.

The elections to the 81-seat Jharkhand assembly are scheduled to be held in two phases on 13 November and 20 November.

Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren has filed his nomination papers from the Barhait assembly constituency, where the number of women voters is higher than male voters.

Former chief minister and BJP nominee Champai Soren is contesting from the Saraikela seat.

Majhgaon assembly constituency in West Singhbhum district registered the highest number of women voters compared to their male counterparts.

Jharkhand has around 2.60 crore electors, including 1.31 crore male and 1.29 crore female voters, compared to 2.23 crore in the 2019 assembly elections.

There are 11.84 lakh first-time voters and 1.13 lakh people with disabilities, third-gender individuals, and senior citizens over 85, who are expected to vote.

In a bid to woo women voters in the state, political parties are leaving no stone unturned.

BJP has pitched Gogo Didi Yojana to counter the JMM-led alliance government's Maiyan Samman Yojana to attract female voters. *—PTI*

Thorat's daughter, others booked for vandalism

MUMBAI, 27 OCT

Police in Maharashtra's Ahilyanagar district have registered two FIRs against Congressman Balasaheb Thorat's daughter and several people for alleged vandalism and unlawful assembly during a protest against a BJP leader, an official said on Sunday. Throat's daughter Jayashree Thorat and her supporters on Saturday demonstrated in Sangamner in the district against BJP leader Vasantrao Deshmukh for his alleged crass comments directed at her. Deshmukh, a long-time opponent of the Thorats, made the alleged remarks against Jayashree at a programme organised by BJP leader Sujay Vikhe Patil sparking angry reactions from workers. *—PTI*

2 cadres of banned PLA arrested with arms in Manipur

IMPHAL, 27 OCT

Two cadres of the proscribed outfit People's Liberation Army were arrested in Manipur's Tengnoupal district, police said on Sunday. They were held by a team of Assam Rifles from the vicinity of border pillar number 87 on Saturday and handed over to the police, an official statement said. The two have been identified as N Priyo Singh, 21, and S Devjit Singh, 21, and handed over to Pallel Police Station, it added. On Friday, security forces apprehended one cadre of the outlawed Prepak (Pro) from Yanghoubung village near the India-Myanmar border, an officer said. Meanwhile, security forces, during a search operation at the foothills of Thangjing ridge. *—PTI*

Bihar: Shahabuddin's wife, son join RJD

PATNA, 27 OCT

Former RJD MP Mohd Shahabuddin's wife Hina Shahab, who had contested the recent Lok Sabha polls as an Independent candidate from Bihar's Siwan, on Sunday joined the party along with her son Osama Shahab.

Party supremo Lalu Prasad's heir apparent Tejashwi Yadav welcomed them and described Shahabuddin as "a founding member" of the RJD.

Yadav claimed that induction of the late leader's family members will "help us in our fight against communal forces represented by BJP and RSS".

Both, Hina and her son, joined the RJD at 10 Circular Road, the official residence of former Bihar CM Rabri Devi.

Arguably, the most dreaded gangster-turned-politician of Bihar, Shahabuddin, had remained unbeaten in his stronghold of Siwan until 2007, *—ANI/ PTI*

Indian cricketer Ishan Kishan's father, E Pranav Kumar Pandey, also known as Chunnu, joined Janata Dal United (JDU), on Sunday **PHOTO: PTI**

Sita Soren breaks down over minister's derogatory remarks

Jamtara, 27 Oct

BJP leader Sita Soren on Sunday broke down while speaking about the derogatory remarks allegedly made by Congress minister Irfan Ansari regarding her. nsari, the Congress candidate in the seat, allegedly made the derogatory remark about Soren after filling his nomination on Thursday. "Ansari has been targeting me since my candidature from the seat was announced... Since my husband is not alive...." she said, breaking down. *—PTI*

TMC GOVT UNDER FIRE

Union Home Minister Amit Shah with party leader Mithun Chakraborty at the BJP's membership drive, in Kolkata, Sunday **PHOTO: PTI**

Shah says Didi sponsors infiltration in Bengal

KOLKATA, 27 OCT

Asserting that peace can be established in West Bengal only when cross-border infiltration stops, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday exhorted the people of the state to bring in change in the 2026 assembly elections.

Inaugurating a new passenger terminal building and a cargo gate 'Maitri Dwar' at Petrapole land port in the state, Shah said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is committed to the development of West Bengal.

"Bring in change in West Bengal in 2026. (We) will put an end to infiltration and ensure peace in the state", Shah said.

He slammed the TMC government in the state over the issue of "corruption".

Shah alleged that a major portion of the funds sent by the Centre to West Bengal was "usurped due to corruption" in the state.

"Acche Din in West Bengal will start from 2026", he exclaimed. Instead of going to the beneficiaries, the "money goes to the TMC leaders", he alleged.

Shah accused TMC government of being involved in the "state-sponsored infiltration" and corruption, and claimed that incidents of assault on women in Sandeshkhali and the rape and murder of a doctor at RG Kar hospital were pieces of evidence that women are "not safe" in the state.

"Our mothers and sisters are not safe in Bengal," he said, calling for immediate action to ensure the safety and security of women in the state.

This was Shah's first visit to Bengal after the Lok Sabha polls in April-May, and also after the RG Kar incident, where a woman doctor was allegedly raped and murdered, which triggered a national-wide protest. *—PTI*

KTR's brother-in-law's farmhouse raided, 1 arrested with cocaine

HYDERABAD, 27 OCT

Police here raided a farmhouse allegedly belonging to a senior BRS leader's brother-in-law and booked one person, who tested positive for cocaine at the party organised there.

Leaders of the ruling Congress in Telangana on Sunday said the party was held at the farmhouse of Raj Pakala, brother-in-law of the BRS leader, and demanded a thorough investigation over the matter.

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar alleged that the Congress government in Telangana is just "pretending" to enforce the law but is actually "protecting the BRS bigwigs".

According to police, following input that a party was going on at the farmhouse in Janwada, with "drugs and liquor unauthorisedly", a team of Cyberabad Police and Excise officials raided the place on the intervening night of 26 and 27 October and found 21 men and 14 women participants.

The farmhouse belonging to KTR's brother-in-law, Raj Pakala (inset) was caught with alleged use of drugs and alcohol **PHOTO: ANI/X**

All the male participants were subjected to drug tests and one person in the gathering tested positive for cocaine and a case under relevant sections of the NDPS Act was registered. *—PTI*

PM gifts Putin, Uzbekistan and Iran Presidents

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi showcased Maharashtra's handcrafted works to the leaders of Iran and Uzbekistan and Jharkhand's art to Russian President Vladimir Putin during the recent BRICS Summit, according to officials.Modi gifted a Mother of Pearl (MOP) sea-shell vase to Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian.

To Uzbekistan's President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, Modi presented a traditional Warli painting, a revered art form from Maharashtra's Warli tribe. Putin was presented with a Sohrai painting from Jharkhand's Hazaribagh district. *—PTI*

Cong: BJP giving fertilisers to only MP poll-areas

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

Congress on Sunday alleged that fertilisers were being supplied in Madhya Pradesh only where bypolls are taking place, and said that this shows that the BJP can stoop to any level for votes. Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh shared on X a media report which claimed that while farmers across Madhya Pradesh are standing in queues all night long for Di-Ammonium Phosphate (DAP), the fertilizer is in abundance and even being distributed in advance to farmers of the two assembly seats Budhni (Sehore district) and Vijaypur (Sheopur district) where by-elections are being held. Fertilisers are needed equally everywhere but the rest of the areas are not even getting five per cent of the required DAP, he alleged. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

PDCC letter sparks row over Palakkad seat candidacy

PALAKKAD, 27 OCT

A purported letter from the Palakkad District Congress Committee (PDCC) to the All-India Congress Committee (AICC), recommending senior leader K Muraleedharan as the candidate for the upcoming Palakkad Assembly by-poll, has sparked controversy in Kerala. The CPI(M) claimed the letter exposes internal divides in Congress over Youth Congress president Rahul Mamkootathil's candidacy, alleging he was chosen through a "special package" by Opposition Leader V D Satheesan and MP Shafi Parambil. Though the PDCC initially backed Muraleedharan, Satheesan and Parambil reportedly influenced a change, leading to debate. Former Congress member P S Sarin entered the race as an independent backed by the Left, with CPI(M) leaders endorsing him as a strong candidate. Congress leaders, including Muraleedharan and Satheesan, have since downplayed issue, *—PTI*

1st for DMK, DyCM extends Deepavali wishes

CHENNAI, 27 OCT

In a rare departure from the DMK's traditions, party leader and Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister minister Udhayanidhi Stalin has extended his Deepavali greetings to those "who have faith," remarks that drew sarcastic response from Opposition BJP.

BJP has been targeting the DMK for not wishing people on Hindu festivals, including Deepavali and Vinayaka Chathurthi.

DMK leaders including its late president and former Chief Minister M Karunanidhi have not greeted people on Deepavali, in line with their rationalistic beliefs.

However, at a party event here on Saturday, while extending his greetings to supporters for the party's platinum jubilee celebrations, Udhayanidhi also greeted people for "Deepa oli thirunaal" much to the surprise of many.

Deepa oli thirunaal roughly translates to the Day of the Light of lamp.

TN BJP leader Narayanan Thirupathi took a swipe at Udhayanidhi.

In a cryptic post on 'X,' he referred to the deputy CM's comments and said, "for those who don't have belief, greetings to live like Narakasura."

Further, in a veiled attack on Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi, Udhayanidhi said he is "allergic" to the very word 'Dravidam,' and thinks it can be finished off by not taking its name. The Governor also had a problem with the name Tamil Nadu, he claimed. *—PTI*

Udhayanidhi Stalin **PHOTO:PTI**

REVEALS POLL GOALS

TVK's Vijay targets DMK in debut rally

VILLUPURAM, 27 OCT

Forces dividing the country on religious lines and corrupt entities are his party's enemies, TVK leader and top Tamil actor Vijay said here on Sunday, and announced his party has been based on secular social justice ideologies with leaders like EVR Periyar and K Kamaraj as its guiding lights.

The latest entrant to Tamil Nadu politics, Tamizhaga Vetri Kazhagam founder Vijay took an apparent dig at the DMK and its first family, saying its leaders were calling the "anti-people government as Dravida model government."

In his maiden public speech eight months after announcing the launch of TVK, Vijay said the late veterans MG Ramachandran and NT Ramarao where ridiculed as mere cinema actors when they made their political plunge "but they continue to remain in the hearts of the people" of the respective states, i.e Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.

"Those spoiling the country with divisive politics is TVK's primary ideological enemy. The next is a selfish family looting Tamil Nadu in the name of Dravida model (governance), using the names of Periyar and Anna; its our political enemy," Vijay added.

TVK will not see Dravidam and Tamil nationalism as different.

A significant number of supporters gathered during TVK Vijay's (inset) first political speech on Sunday **PHOTO: PTI**

Recalling his deceased sister, he said that just like her death had impacted him, the alleged suicide of medical aspirant, S Anitha from Ariyalur in the state who could not clear NEET, also had a profound impact on him. *—PTI*

Disengagement 1st step, de-escalation next: EAM

MUMBAI, 27 OCT

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Sunday said the disengagement of troops at Depsang and Demchok in Ladakh is the first step, and it is expected that India will return to the 2020 patrolling status. The next step is de-escalation, which will not happen until India is sure that the same is happening on the other side as well, the EAM said, obviously referring to China.

Earlier this week, India announced it had reached an agreement with China on patrolling along the LAC in eastern Ladakh, a breakthrough in ending the over four-year-long military standoff. Addressing a press conference in Mumbai, Jaishankar said consensus has been achieved on patrolling and disengagement in Depsang and Demchok.

"It is obvious it will take time to implement the same. This is the issue of disengagement and patrolling which meant our armies had come very close to each other and now they have gone back to their bases. We hope the 2020 status is restored," he said.

"The completion of disengagement is the first step. The next step is de-escalation which will not happen until India is sure that the same is happening on the other side as well." he added. *— PTI*

PHOTO:PTI

PHOTO: PTI

Thane court acquits 5 accused of cruelty on woman

THANE, 27 OCT

A court in Maharashtra's Thane district has acquitted five people accused on charges of cruelty to a woman and miscarriage attempt, observing the chargesheet lacked evidence. Additional Sessions Judge Vasudha L Bhosale, in the order on 22 October, said filing a chargesheet without evidence increased the pendency of cases and wasted the court's time, which it is bound to give for sensitive matters. "Filing a chargesheet without evidence has overburdened the courts. This practice needs to be stopped. Hence, an inquiry needs to be initiated," it said. The court acquitted Shaharum Fakre Alam Shaikh,42, Fakre Alam Jaitul Aabdin Shaikh, 64, Nafisa Fakre Alain Shaikh, 59, Marim Fakre, 37, and Aliya Fakre Alam Shaikh,37. *—PTI*

UP woman molested by coach attendant in train

BALLIA, 27 OCT

A woman passenger on board the Gondia-Barauni Express train was allegedly molested by a coach attendant, railway officials said on Sunday. The incident occurred on 22 October after the train departed from the Ballia railway station, according to the Government Railway Police (GRP). Station House Officer (SHO) of Ballia GRP, Vivekanand said, "A young woman from Motihari district, Bihar, was allegedly molested and harassed by coach attendant Rakesh Kumar Srivastava while she was asleep on her berth." The victim promptly reported the incident to the railway police on the train itself. A case was initially registered at the Chhapra GRP police station on 24 October based on the complaint. *—PTI*

4-year-old killed in black magic ritual by aunt

BAREILLY, 27 OCT

four-year-old girl was allegedly killed by her aunt and a 'tantrik' as part of "black magic" rituals here in a village. The duo has been arrested, officials said on Sunday. Acting on a missing person's report filed by the girl's family, police found her body from the aunt's residence, they said. The activities of Savitri, the aunt, were found to be "suspicious" when she refused to allow anyone to enter her home, police said, adding that they took the help of CCTV footage of the area. Police raided her residence and found Misty's body hidden in a sack near a borewell. According to police, murder was motivated by black magic rituals performed by Savitri and her relative Ganga Ram who is a 'tantrik'. *—PTI*

15-year-old UP girl sexually harassed by schoolmates

MUZAFFARNAGAR, 27 OCT

A 15-year-old girl was allegedly sexually harassed and threatened by two juvenile schoolmates in a village here, police said on Sunday. The incident occurred on Saturday when the girl was returning home from school, police said. The girl's family filed a complaint and alleged that she was sexually harassed by two juvenile schoolmates. They tried to kill her but she managed to escape, police said. They also made a video of the girl and posted it on social media. A case has been registered under sections 79 (word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman),109 (attempt to murder), 351 (criminal intimidation) and 352 (intentional insult with intent to provoke a breach of peace), Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act and Information Technology Act.*—PTI*

Delhi pollution worsens, people feel suffocated

18% families plan to burst crackers ahead of Deepavali

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

The air quality deteriorated in the national capital on Sunday, with the Air Quality Index (AQI) being recorded at 352, in the 'very poor' category, according to System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR). This is worse than the average AQI recorded at 255 on Saturday, categorized as 'poor'.

Moreover, AQI in Anand Vihar area crossed the 400 mark, being recorded as 405 at 7am, categorised as 'severe', worse than the AQI of 367 recorded on Saturday.

Himanshu, a visitor to the national capital said that the increasing pollution feels 'suffocating.'

"It feels suffocating due to pollution...The govt should look into what can be done to reduce pollution," he told ANI.

Moreover, a cyclist in the city told ANI that they are facing a lot of problems with breathing. "We are from Delhi and we (the cyclist group) cycle daily here, but this situation of air pollution since the last few days we are facing a lot of problems. We can't breathe properly; we get tired faster due to the pollution. We take precautions like wearing a bandana but nothing is working because the pollution is increasing a lot," he said.

An anti-smog gun being used at the Kartavya Path to curb air pollution, near Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi, on Sunday *PHOTO: PTI*

- As per the survey, some showed indifference towards advisories regarding firecrackers, as evidenced by the use of crackers during Karva Chawth

Meanwhile, ahead of Deepavali, a survey conducted in Delhi-NCR has revealed that 18 per cent of the respondents plan to burst firecrackers during the festival of lights, while 55 per cent don't intend to do so. The survey conducted by LocalCircles with a sample size 10,526 said, "Among those who responded to the query, 55 per cent said they will not burn firecrackers as they cause pollution, whereas 19 per cent said they would like to burn crackers, and 9 per cent said they will burn crackers.

As per the survey, some residents showed indifference towards the government advisories regarding firecrackers, as evidenced by the significant use of crackers during the Karva Chawth celebrations on 20 October.

—Agencies

Thick haze covers Taj Mahal views

Agra, 27 Oct

The iconic Taj Mahal in Agra was engulfed in a thick layer of haze on Sunday as pollution levels continued to rise. "I am here on a trip, I wanted to see the sunrise. 14 years ago, I was here and the sky was clear back then. Industrial areas are increasing towards Agra side and vehicle load is also increasing here, I think these are the reasons behind the rise in pollution," a visitor said. *—ANI*

PHOTO: ANI

8L EVACUATED

35.95L affected by cyclone Dana in Odisha; no deaths

People wait in queue as Navy personnel distribute relief materials in the aftermath of cyclone Dana in Kendrapara, Odisha *PHOTO: PTI*

BHUBANESWAR, 27 OCT

A total of 35.95 lakh people in Odisha have been impacted by cyclone Dana and subsequent flooding in 14 districts, the state's Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari said on Sunday.

Pujari also said as many as 8,10,896 people were evacuated to 6,210 cyclone relief centres.

The worst-hit districts include Kendrapara, Balasore and Bhadrak, while the human casualty "still stands at zero", he told reporters here.

"By 10.30am of Sunday, evacuated people were sheltered in 1,178 cyclone relief centres and they are being provided cooked food and other essential items," the minister said.

Polythene sheets are being given to people who lost their houses in the calamity.

He said cyclone Dana, which struck early Friday, has affected people in 1,671 gram panchayats under 108 blocks spread over 14 districts.

According to preliminary reports, around 5,840 houses have been fully or partially damaged due to the cyclone and subsequent flooding, Pujari said.

"Whenever there is a disaster, people lose their houses and get compensation. This time, we want to bring a permanent solution to the problem and provide pucca houses to them in a phased manner," he said.

The Odisha government was also planning to undertake a survey of kutcha houses located in cyclone and flood-prone areas of the state.

A team of the Odisha disaster response force on Sunday rescued at least 24 individuals trapped in a village in Bhadrak district, which was flooded after cyclone Dana triggered heavy rainfall.

The trapped people, including children, women and senior citizens, were rescued with the help of motor boats and taken to a cyclone shelter, an official statement said.

They were left stranded as the village was flooded due to rising waters of the swollen Salandi river, it said. *—PTI*

RAIN BATTERS TN

An area in Tamil Nadu's Madurai is severely waterlogged following unprecedented rainfall in a short amount of time *PHOTO: SCREENGRAB*

12 FISHERMEN HELD BY SL FOR ILLEGAL FISHING

COLOMBO, 27 OCT

The Sri Lankan Navy on Sunday arrested 12 Indian fishermen and seized their trawler for allegedly poaching in its territorial waters, according to an official statement.

With the latest arrest, the number of Indian nationals apprehended this year by the island nation in such incidents has risen to 462.

The fishermen were arrested, and their trawler was seized off the coast of Point Pedro, Jaffna, in the northern province, the Sri Lanka Navy said in a press release.

The 12 apprehended fishermen were escorted to the Kankesanthurai Harbour and will be handed over to the Mailadi Fisheries Inspector for further action, it said.

The Sri Lankan Navy has "held 62 Indian fishing boats and 462 Indian fishermen in island waters thus far in 2024 and handed them over to authorities for legal action," the statement said.

The fishermen issue is a contentious one in the ties between India and Sri Lanka, with Lankan Navy personnel even firing at Indian fishermen in the Palk Strait and seizing their boats in several alleged incidents of illegally entering Sri Lankan territorial waters. *—PTI*

UP gym trainer arrested for murdering woman

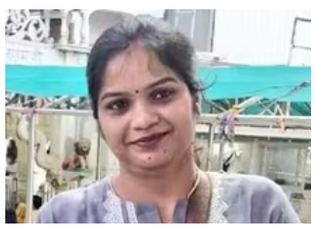
KANPUR, 22 OCT

A gym trainer in Uttar Pradesh's Kanpur has been arrested for allegedly killing a 32-year-old woman and burying her body near the residence of the Kanpur District Magistrate, the police said on Saturday night.

Inspired by the Bollywood movie Drishyam, the accused Vishal Soni killed Ekta Gupta, with whom he was in a relationship, and buried her body in the city's posh area after she objected to his engagement to another woman.

Police said that the accused and the deceased had a heated argument before the incident, which, as per the officials, occurred on 24 June. DCP East, Shravan Kumar Singh, said, "The incident occurred on 24 June. The victim used to go to the accused's gym to train... The victim was particularly displeased about something and had a heated argument with the accused, after which the latter murdered her and buried her here... He dug a pit here and buried her body."

Soni was earlier arrested in connection with the case after the woman's husband, Rahul Gupta, filed a case against him. *—Agencies*



Vishal Soni; Ekta Gupta *PHOTO: X*

2 die after inhaling toxic fumes at Ahmedabad factory

AHMEDABAD, 27 OCT

Two workers died and seven were hospitalised after they inhaled toxic fumes at a textile factory in Gujarat's Ahmedabad on Sunday, police said.

The incident occurred at Devi Synthetics in the Narol industrial area of the city.

Nine workers inhaled toxic fumes that leaked when spent acid was being transferred into a tank at the factory, Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Ravi Mohan Saini said.

"Police received information around 10.30 am that nine persons were affected due to a toxic gas leak in a factory in Narol and were taken to LG Hospital, where two died," he said. Seven workers are hospitalised, of whom four are critical and are being treated in the ICU, he said.

- A preliminary investigation revealed that spent acid, used in the dyeing industry, was being transferred into a tank when the workers nearby were affected

A preliminary investigation revealed that spent acid, used in the printing and dyeing industry, was being transferred into a tank when the workers nearby were affected, he said.

The official said a team from the police, Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL), industrial safety and Gujarat Pollution Control Board (GPCB) officials reached the site and started probing the exact cause. Industrial safety and FSL officials are probing to find out if the factory followed due procedures regarding NOC, etc., and police will take action based on their report, he said. *—PTI*

Kerala vlogger couple found dead at home

T'PURAM, 27 OCT

A couple from Kerala was found dead at their home in Parassala, Thiruvanantha puram here on Sunday. The deceased, Selvaraj,45, and his wife Priya, 40, are residents of Kinarumukku.

According to police, Selvaraj was found hanging, while Priya's body was found lying on the bed. The bodies are believed to be two days old.

The couple were vloggers who uploaded a video to YouTube on Friday night. They also spoke to their son, who works in Ernakulam, over the phone on Friday. It was when the son returned home, he found his parents dead. Although the gate was locked, the doors were open. Relatives have expressed suspicion regarding the circumstances of their deaths. Parassala police's preliminary conclusion is that it may be a case of suicide. *—Agencies*

4 minors among 5 held for killing teen in Delhi

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

Delhi Police has nabbed five people, including four minors for allegedly killing a 16-year-old boy and injuring another in the Kishangarh area of southwest Delhi, officials said on Sunday.

One of the victims was found dead with multiple stab wounds while the other was under treatment for a bullet injury, they said.

According to police, the accused, Sanjay Mehlawat, 38 had planned to kill both of them over some dispute with the victims and had sent his teenage associates for the task.

Around 5.45pm on Saturday, a PCR call regarding a stabbing at Gaushala village was received at Kishangarh police station, a senior police officer said. "A team was sent to the spot. One empty shell of a bullet was found. It was also found that the two injured have been taken to Safdarjung Hospital," the officer said.

Saurabh Yadav, 18, had a gunshot injury on his back, and the other boy was brought to the hospital with multiple stab injuries and was declared dead. Yadav told police that when he and his friend reached, three of the accused opened fire at them. While Yadav was injured, the attackers allegedly chased his friend and stabbed him the officer said. Yadav claimed it was a planned attack and was being carried out on the instructions of Mehlawat, the officer said. Police arrested Mehlawat and apprehended four juveniles -- all aged between 16 and 17, the officer said. *—PTI*

PADDY PROCUREMENT

Punjab ryots continue protests for 2nd day

PHAGWARA, 27 OCT

Farmers in Punjab continued their protest for the second day on Sunday to press for multiple demands, including paddy procurement.

As part of their protest, farmers organised road blocks, or "chakka jam," in several parts of Punjab, including Sangrur, Moga, Phagwara, and Batla.

Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh committee and Sanyukta Kisan Morcha (non-political) took part in the protest.

The farmers on Saturday also protested against police actions against them for stubble burning.

The farmers on Saturday also protested against police actions against them for stubble burning *PHOTO: ANI*

On Saturday, Union Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers, JP Nadda, met Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann to discuss the availability of DAP (Di-ammonium Phosphate) fertilizer for Punjab's ongoing agricultural season. Mann highlighted Punjab's need for DAP supplies during this critical time. Following this, Nadda assured him of the centre's commitment and ensuring sufficient supplies of DAP for Punjab.

Mann said that it is understandable that as 70 per cent of DAP is imported from other countries so due to the Ukraine conflict and other international reasons there is a shortage of DAP. He, however, also added that the need for DAP in the state is mainly till 15 November, so the central government should accord priority to allot DAP to the state in comparison to other states that need it later.

Union Minister Nadda assured the Punjab delegation that the Department of Fertilizers is taking every possible step to ensure sufficient supplies reach the state without delay. *—ANI*

78TH INFANTRY DAY

Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, Chief of Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi and others pay homage at the National War Memorial on the 78th Infantry Day, in New Delhi, on Sunday
PHOTO: PTI

Ahead of polls, Wayanad landslide survivors in focus

The issue of rehabilitation of the survivors of 30 July landslides has taken centre stage in Kerala's Wayanad ahead of next month's Lok Sabha bypoll, with Congress-led UDF and CPI(M)-headed LDF raising the matter in response to concerns from the affected families.

According to the government, the deadly disaster has claimed 231 lives while 47 people are still missing.

Bypoll to Wayanad constituency is being held on 13 November and the election was necessitated due to the resignation of local MP and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi as he emerged victorious from Uttar Pradesh's Rae Bareily as well, in this year's general elections.

Local residents have stressed that land acquisition for rehabilitation must be completed promptly, as it has been delayed after estate owners challenged it in Kerala High Court.

Local residents have stressed that land acquisition for rehabilitation must be completed promptly, as it has been delayed after estate owners challenged it in Kerala High Court ***PHOTO: PTI***

The land, meant for new townships under the Disaster Management Act, includes the Harrison Malayalam Estate in Nedumbala, Meppadi grama panchayat, and Elston Estate in Kalpetta, all designated for housing survivors.

Besides, demands for loan waivers, immediate relief assistance, and increased rent support for those displaced and living in rented accommodations remain unmet, they added.

LDF candidate Sathyan Mokeri visited several landslide survivors in their rented accommodations on Saturday and claimed that the rehabilitation efforts by the ruling Left government in the state were a model for the world.

He also blamed the BJP-ruled Centre for not providing any help for rehabilitation of the landslide-affected people of the hill district.

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi, who is the UDF candidate, in an emotional open letter, recalled her visit to Chooralmala and Mundakkai with her brother and Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi where she saw the devastation wrought by the landslide and the depth of the loss they suffered.

Congress MLA from Kalpetta in Wayanad T Siddique, who moved an adjournment motion in the Assembly, said that despite the Prime Minister's assurance not even a single penny was given by the Centre for relief and rehabilitation of the landslide-hit people of Wayanad.

According to Navya Haridas, BJP candidate, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had personally consoled the landslide survivors.

She alleged the Kerala government has so far not given even the relief aid granted by the Union Government to the survivors.

Kerala Revenue Minister K Rajan expressed disappointment over the Central government's "negative approach" towards providing aid for rehabilitation efforts.

"It has been 100 days since the disaster, and we are still waiting for a special relief package," he said.

Amidst the political blame games and gestures of support from leaders, the survivors are gearing up to stage protests to demand attention from all candidates regarding their rehabilitation.

"We are planning to hold a fast in Kalpetta or Meppadi to bring our issues to the forefront for political parties. We believe it would be more impactful if it coincided with Priyanka Gandhi's campaign visit," said Naseer Alakkal, Chairman of the Janasabdham Action Committee told PTI.

The committee represents survivors from wards 10, 11, and 12 of the Meppadi grama panchayat, where the devastating landslide occurred.

"The situation is extremely serious. The government announced an immediate relief assistance of Rs 9,000 to Rs 10,000 for survivors in these three wards, but 132 people are yet to receive it. The government has been providing funds to cover monthly rent for the past three months, with the assistance initially promised for six months."

Another major demand is the release of the official list of those who died and are still missing in the disaster.

According to official records, 47 people remain unaccounted for, and locals are urging authorities to issue death certificates to their relatives.

There is also a demand for authorities to provide adequate treatment facilities for those still residing in the Chooralmala region, which remains isolated after the catastrophic disaster.

Currently, around 800 displaced families are residing in rented houses following the disaster.

The Kerala government sought Rs 2,000 crore in central assistance for compensating and rehabilitating the victims of the Wayanad landslide. However, only Rs 291.2 crore has been received so far, disbursed in two installments of Rs 145.6 crore each.

As part of its rehabilitation plan, the state government aims to build one or two townships for the survivors, featuring single-storey houses of approximately 1,000 square feet, designed with the option for future expansion to two storeys. *—PTI*

SALAR ساہر

Docs struggle to treat long Covid patients in India

Doctors in India are grappling to diagnose and treat unexplained and persistent symptoms of long Covid patients due to limited guidelines, whereas researchers have flagged inadequate studies on the condition.

With the World Health Organisation declaring an end to Covid as a global health emergency in May last year, focused efforts are underway around the world to estimate the burden of long Covid population.

The condition refers to the set of lingering symptoms affecting varied body parts and persisting well beyond the acute Covid infection period, including cough, muscle and joint pain, fatigue, brain fog and difficulty in focusing. The viral disease is caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

While studies have suggested that about a third of those moderately or severely infected are likely to suffer from long Covid, region-wise though, incidence could vary.

A study by researchers, including those from Harvard Medical School, US, estimated that 31 per cent of the once-infected people in North America, 44 per cent in Europe, and 51 per cent in Asia, have long Covid, which is "challenging the healthcare system, but there are limited guidelines for its treatment". It was published in the International Journal of Infectious Diseases in September.

In India, however, studies on long Covid are few and far between.

One such study by Maulana Azad Medical College in New Delhi, conducted from May 2022 to March 2023 on 553 patients who had recovered from Covid, found that about 45 per cent had lingering symptoms, persistent fatigue and dry cough being the most common.

Understanding the long-term effects of the virus is important for developing management strategies, optimising healthcare delivery, and providing support to recovered Covid patients in the community, they said.

Doctors, too, have reported a rise in patients complaining of symptoms that they did not have pre-Covid.

In the absence of medical guidelines to diagnose long Covid, doctors are having to resort to broad, non-specific tests and questionnaires to a patient's 'quality of life'.

Studies have shown that the fatigue experienced in long Covid is similar to that in cancer patients, with a quality of life similar to Parkinson's disease.

Inflammation persisting despite recovery from acute Covid infection is thought to lie at the heart of long Covid. However, tests to measure this specific immune response are lacking, even as researchers have been working in this direction worldwide.

One such effort comes from Shiv Nadar University, where a team led by Samanta has developed a fluorescent probe capable of detecting inflammation in brain cells that can arise due to Covid infection.

The probe measures nitric oxide levels in brain cells, especially in human microglia cells, where increased NO levels are linked to the SARS-CoV-2 infection. Microglia are immune cells in the brain that fight disease and help maintain brain health.

Lysosomes within microglia, which help clear foreign disease-causing agents like the SARS-CoV-2 virus, produce nitric oxide as part of an immune response to infection. The probe detects nitric oxide produced in lysosomes in response to infection and thereby allows for a measurement of inflammation levels.

This examination method can provide "qualitative information on infection status", said Samanta, corresponding author on the study published in the journal Analytical Chemistry in American Chemical Society.

He explained that patients with pre-existing conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease or multiple sclerosis (an autoimmune disorder) could exhibit prolonged neuroinflammation and loss of brain cells following Covid infection.

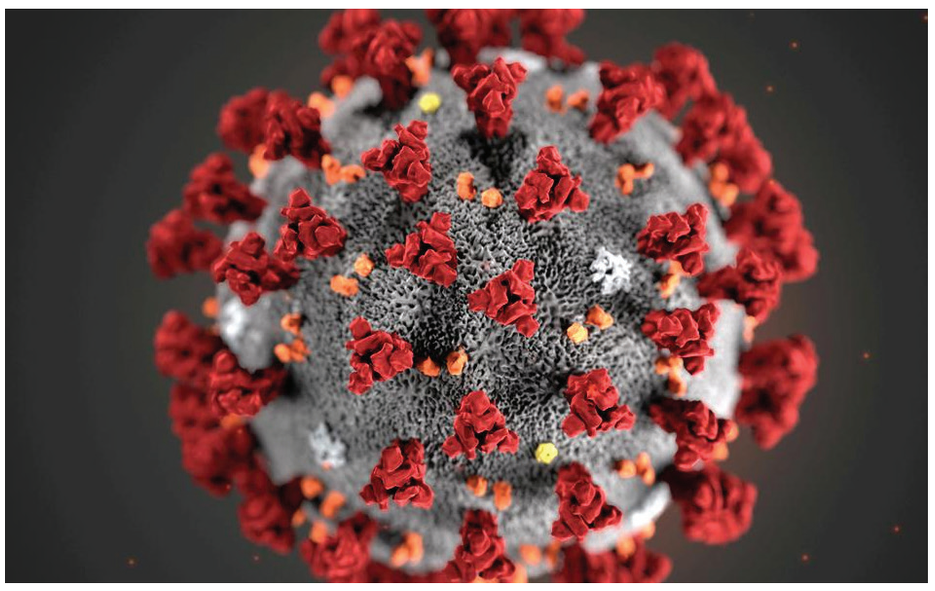
While the probe has shown efficacy in cell cultures, animal studies would need to be done, before testing it in humans, Samanta said.

Looking at the World Health Organization International Clinical Trials Registry Platform, the study by Harvard Medical School had found that 587 clinical studies were conducted on long Covid, of which about 53 per cent (312) were testing potential treatments.

Most of these were found to be conducted in the US (58), followed by India (55) and Spain (20). The trials looked at interventions including physical exercise, psychotherapy, and pharmacological ones such as paxlovid and fluvoxamine.

However, "to date, only 11 of these 312 studies have published their results that were not confirmative," the researchers wrote.

The team called for studies to look into sleep disorders which were rarely included in the registered clinical studies. Further, interventions targeting the biological processes responsible for long Covid are needed but currently lacking, they said. *—PTI*



The condition refers to the set of lingering symptoms affecting varied body parts and persisting well beyond the acute Covid infection period, including cough, muscle and joint pain ***PHOTO: FREEPIK***

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

India advancing in gender equality; safety issues remain barriers: UN

India's progress towards gender equality has accelerated in recent years, with increased investments and focus on women's leadership at the grassroots but social norms, limited workforce participation and gaps in safety measures hinder full gender parity, UN Women officials said.

In an interview, Daniel Seymour, UN Women's Director of Strategic Partnerships and Susan Jane Ferguson, Country Representative for UN Women in India, shared insights on the country's strides and the challenges that remain.

The conversation highlighted India's increased investments in women's empowerment and gender-responsive policies, yet stressed that deep-rooted social norms and limited financing continue to hamper full progress.

"India's progress is significant, but closing the remaining gaps requires targeted efforts across both public and private sectors," Ferguson said.

India has seen substantial growth in recent years, especially in gender-responsive budgeting, which has increased to 6.8 per cent, according to the Gender Budget Statement (GBS), Union Budget of India 2024-25.

"This increase in public investment is crucial to transforming women's lives, especially when directed toward specific needs of women and girls," Ferguson said, emphasising that continued expansion of this budget is essential to close remaining gaps in areas such as health, education, and economic opportunities.

Despite an increase in public investment, Ferguson noted that private sector investment remains essential to reach these goals fully.

"We are actively collaborating with Indian businesses to enhance investments for women's empowerment initiatives," she added, highlighting the role of private sector support in boosting access to finance for women-owned businesses.

She said progress has also been notable in women's grassroots leadership, where women are increasingly represented in panchayats and local government bodies.

Ferguson pointed out that some states have achieved gender parity at these levels, while the passage of the 33 per cent reservation for women in Parliament is expected to have a transformative impact on India's national political landscape.

"India's strong participation in grassroots politics is a global best practice, yet continued efforts at the national level, including enforcing the new reservation, are needed to ensure more robust female representation at the national level," Ferguson remarked.

Country Representative for UN Women in India, Susan Jane Ferguson (inset), shared insights on the country's strides and the challenges that remain ***PHOTO: FREEPIK/ X***

However, both officials highlighted that gender-based violence (GBV) remains a persistent issue in India, one that impedes women's safety and freedom. Despite India's robust legal framework, Seymour noted, enforcement and cultural norms hinder effective implementation.

"While the laws are in place, we continue to see social norms that enable violence and harassment not just in India but globally," he stated.

Ferguson pointed out that UN Women is collaborating with state governments, such as in Madhya Pradesh, to train police and introduce community policing efforts focused on women's safety.

The government has many essential schemes such as women-led police stations and "pink police stations" specifically for women; helplines and 'One Stop Centres'. UN Women India office facilitates strengthening this support. A significant area of UN Women's work in India involves addressing systemic barriers to women's labour force participation.

Although the Female Labour Force Participation rate has risen to around 37 per cent in India, as per the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation's Periodic Labour Force Survey 2022-23, challenges remain. "With the right investments in childcare, safe transport, and workplace protections, women can access greater economic opportunities," Ferguson said.

In Tamil Nadu, for instance, UN Women has been working to create safer workspaces in the garment industry, partnering with the government, businesses, unions, civil society organisations and communities to address workplace harassment.

Such initiatives, Ferguson explained, are essential to support the millions of women who depend on these industries. Climate change and gender equality in India was another area of focus.

"India will be among the countries most affected by climate change due to its large population and existing climate. We know that climate change disproportionately impacts women," Ferguson emphasized.

With research indicating that extreme heat and climate disruptions will increasingly affect India, UN Women has partnered with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to incorporate gender-focused approaches within disaster response.

"From disaster planning to providing safer spaces in temporary shelters, involving women in decision-making ensures that climate resilience benefits everyone," said Seymour. He further explained that including women in the renewable energy sector could foster inclusive growth, as they are often pioneers in sustainable practices within industries.

On the international stage, Seymour underscored the importance of India's role in advancing global gender equality. "India has always been a supporter of gender equality in international forums."

"And as one of the world's largest democracies, India has a powerful opportunity to be a leading voice, to share its successes and lessons learned more widely, and address the challenges experienced along the way," he noted.

Ferguson summarised, "India's progress in gender equality is inspiring. So much has already been achieved, closing the remaining challenges will require a holistic approach that addresses social norms, systemic hurdles, economic barriers, and the active involvement of both public and private sectors." *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Sri Lanka's ruling party wins Elpitiya local council polls

COLOMBO, 27 OCT

Sri Lanka's ruling National People's Power (NPP) party won a local council election in the Southern Province, passing its first electoral test since winning the presidential election last month. The Elpitiya local council elections were held on Saturday, and NPP- the broader front of the Marxist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna -- won 15 of the 30 seats. The main Opposition in the current Parliament, the Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB), and other splinter groups secured half of the seats. As a result, the NPP must form a coalition with one of these parties to run the council. However, the NPP is generally politically averse to forming alliances with other parties. *—PTI*

Diphtheria cases surge in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA, 27 OCT

Diphtheria cases have surged in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, with children across the province continuing to face health risks despite ongoing vaccination efforts led by the Expanded Program of Immunisation (EPI) and the K-P Health Department. Health authorities are grappling with challenges to fully inoculate children against the infectious disease, as it remains a pressing concern in several districts, the Express Tribune reported. Sajid Khan, a parent who brought his young son to Lady Reading Hospital in Peshawar, highlighted the scarcity of diphtheria vaccinations in areas like Bannu, one of K-P's merged regions. "If our children were fully vaccinated, we would not have to worry about our little ones falling sick. When one child contracts the disease, it can soon spread in the entire village, affecting other children as well," he stated. *—ANI*

NASA astronaut released from hospital

WASHINGTON, 27 OCT

A NASA astronaut who was briefly hospitalized after returning from space has been released, the space agency said Saturday. NASA's Matthew Dominick, Michael Barratt and Jeanette Epps, and Russia's Alexander Grebenkin were flown to the hospital for additional medical checks Friday after parachuting into the Gulf of Mexico off the Florida coast aboard a SpaceX capsule. Three were released and returned to Houston. A NASA astronaut — who was not identified — was kept for observation for an unspecified medical issue. The space agency declined to identify the astronaut or release details about their condition, citing patient privacy. *—PTI*

Oliver seeks help to find cheddar worth £300K

LONDON, 27 OCT

The celebrity chef Jamie Oliver has encouraged cheese lovers to help police catch scammers who defrauded a London dairy out of more than £3,00,000 worth of English and Welsh cheddar. Neal's Yard Dairy, a distributor and retailer of British artisan cheese, delivered 22 tonnes of award-winning clothbound cheddar to the alleged fraudster posing as a wholesale distributor for a large French retailer before realising it had been duped. Oliver, 49, described the incident involving more than 950 wheels of cheddar as a "brazen heist of shocking proportions". He told followers on Instagram to be alert if they heard anything about "lorryloads of very posh cheese" being offered "for cheap", adding that the cheddar would have originally been worth about £3,00,000. *—The Guardian*

Israeli strikes kill 40 people in N Gaza

Hezbollah rockets strike northern town

Flame and smoke rises from an Israeli strike on Dahiyeh, in Lebanon on Sunday morning *PHOTO: PTI*

DEIR AL-BALAH, 27 OCT

Israeli strikes on northern Gaza have killed at least 40 people, mostly women and children, Palestinian officials said Sunday, as its offensive in the hard-hit and isolated north entered a third week and aid groups described a humanitarian catastrophe.

The Gaza Health Ministry's emergency service said that 11 women and two children were among those killed in the strikes late Saturday on several homes and buildings in the northern town of Beit Lahiya. It said another 15 people were wounded and that the death toll could rise. It listed the names of those killed, who mostly came from three families.

The Israeli military said it carried out a precise strike on militants in a structure in Beit Lahiya and took steps to avoid harming civilians. It disputed what it said were "numbers published by the media," without elaborating or providing evidence for its own account.

Israel is still carrying out daily strikes across Gaza, even as it wages and air and ground war with the Hezbollah militant group in Lebanon.

The cascading conflicts have raised fears of an all-out regional war pitting Israel and the United States against Iran and its militant proxies, which also include the Houthi rebels in Yemen and armed groups in Syria and Iraq.

WAR WATCH MIDDLE EAST

Red Cross describes 'horrific circumstances' in northern Gaza

Israel has been waging a massive air and ground offensive in northern Gaza since October 6, after saying that Hamas militants had regrouped there. Hundreds of people have been killed and tens of thousands of Palestinians have fled to Gaza City in the latest wave of displacement in the yearlong war.

Israel says its strikes on Gaza only target militants, and it blames Hamas for civilian casualties because the militants fight in densely populated areas. The military rarely comments on individual strikes, which often kill women and children. *—PTI*

Khamenei sick, son likely to be successor

Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, aged 85, is reportedly seriously ill, with his second oldest son, Mojtaba Khamenei, likely to succeed him when he dies, a Saturday New York Times report disclosed. The report noted that Khamenei's serious medical condition created a "quiet battle" over his succession. It also stated that the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps would have a say in who would become the Ayatollah's successor. Concern grew over Khamenei's successor after former Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi was killed in a helicopter crash last May. *—Agencies*

Ali Khamenei *PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA*

Dozens hurt as truck slams into a bus stop near Tel Aviv

DEIR AL-BALAH, 27 OCT

Israeli authorities say dozens have been wounded after a truck slammed into a bus stop north of Tel Aviv Sunday. The Israeli rescue service Magen David Adom said paramedics were treating dozens of people. Police said the circumstances behind the incident weren't immediately clear. Israel has seen a rise in attacks by Palestinians in recent weeks. *—PTI*

KRISTINE HAVOC

Residents in Laurel, Batangas cross a river to gather aid on Sunday, in Philippines. The Office of Civil Defense said the death toll due to storm Kristine has increased to 90 *PHOTO: ABS-CBN NEWS*

China to take 'counter measures' over US and Taiwan $2B deal

BEIJING, 27 OCT

China will take "countermeasures" to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity, the government said, lambasting a $2bn arms sale package by the United States to Taiwan.

The Pentagon on Friday said the United States had approved a potential $2bn arms sale package to Taiwan, including the delivery for the first time to the island of an advanced air defence missile system battle-tested in Ukraine, including advanced surface-to-air missile systems and radar. The deal awaits approval by Congress.

- China's foreign ministry said it strongly condemned and firmly opposed the sales and had lodged "solemn representations" with the US

China's foreign ministry said it strongly condemned and firmly opposed the sales and had lodged "solemn representations" with the US. The United States has approved $2 billion in arms sales to Taiwan, including the first-time delivery to the self-ruled island of an advanced surface-to-air missile defence system, in a move sure to anger China.

China urges the US to immediately stop arming Taiwan and stop its dangerous moves that undermine peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, it added.

"China will take resolute countermeasures and take all measures necessary to firmly defend national sovereignty, security and territorial integrity," the ministry said, without elaborating.

The US is bound by law to provide Chinese-claimed Taiwan with the means to defend itself despite the lack of formal diplomatic ties, to the anger of Beijing.

The Pentagon's Defence Security Cooperation Agency said the new sale consisted of $1.16bn in missile systems, and radar systems worth an estimated $828m. *—Agencies*

COURT ORDERS REPORT ON HASINA CASE BY 28 NOV

DHAKA, 27 OCT

A Bangladesh court on Saturday ordered the police to submit the investigation report of a murder case against former premier Sheikh Hasina and 23 others by November 28, according to media reports.

The murder case was filed over the death of an 18-year-old college student in Mirpur, Dhaka, during a crackdown by the Hasina-led Awami League government on student-led mass protests that led to her ouster.

On 5 August, Hasina, 77, fled to India in the face of the violent protests against a controversial quota system in government jobs, which led to the death of hundreds of people since mid-July. Dhaka Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Md Ziadur Rahman ordered the submission of the probe report by 28 November after the case was presented in his court, The Daily Star newspaper reported.

The case was filed on 15 August by the victim's brother, who asserted that the accused were directly involved in or facilitated the violence that led to his brother's death and injuries to other students. *—PTI*

US ELECTIONS

Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump *PHOTO: PTI*

Trump claims Harris would lead to WWIII

WASHINGTON DC, 27 OCT

As the campaigning for the US Presidential Elections intensifies with less than two weeks remaining for the polling date, both candidates Donald Trump and Kamala Harris fired strong barbs at each other.

Former president Donald Trump, during his campaign in Pennsylvania, lashed out at Vice President Harris, claiming that if elected she would "guarantee" the United States would enter World War III and would be ineffective in dealing with global leaders like Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Putin.

"To make her president would be to gamble with the lives of millions of people," Trump said. *—ANI*

'Take our lives seriously,' Michelle tells voters

KALAMAZOO, 27 OCT

Michelle Obama challenged men to support Kamala Harris ' bid to be America's first female President, warning at a rally in Michigan on Saturday that women's lives would be at risk if Donald Trump returned to the White House.

The former first lady described the assault on abortion rights as the harbinger of dangerous limitations on healthcare for women. Some men may be tempted to vote for Trump because of their anger at the slow pace of progress, Obama said, but "your rage does not exist in a vacuum."

"I am asking y'all from the core of my being to take our lives seriously," Obama said.

Harris took the stage after Obama and promised the crowd that she would keep their interests in mind — unlike Trump, who she accused of only being interested in himself. *—PTI*

Vice President Kamala Harris greets former First Lady of the United States Michelle Obama on Saturday night *PHOTO: PTI*

Japan's ruling party, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), is likely to lose a parliamentary majority in a snap election *PHOTO: X@AJENGLISH*

Japan's ruling coalition to lose Parl majority

TOKYO, 27 OCT

Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba's conservative ruling party braced for a blow to its comfortable majority in the lower house of Parliament in Sunday's elections amid public rage over the party's financial scandals and discontent over a stagnant economy.

The results could weaken Ishiba's grip on power, possibly leading Japan into political uncertainty, though a change of government was not expected.

Ishiba took office on 1 October, replacing his predecessor Fumio Kishida who resigned after failing to pacify the public over widespread slush fund practices among Liberal Democratic Party lawmakers. Ishiba immediately ordered a snap election in hopes of shoring up support by using his outspoken, reformist image.

Voting began Sunday morning across Japan, where 1,344 candidates, including a record 314 women, are running for office. Ishiba has set a goal of retaining 233 seats for the ruling coalition between the LDP and its Buddhist-backed junior partner Komeito, a majority in the 465-member lower house, the more powerful of Japan's two-chamber Parliament.

The biggest Opposition party, the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan, is led by centrist leader Yoshihiko Noda who briefly served as prime minister during the LDP's 2009-2012 descent from power. Noda's party is expected to make significant gains. *—PTI*

Musk worked in US illegally in 1995: Report

NEW YORK, 27 OCT

Elon Musk briefly worked illegally in the US after abandoning a graduate studies program in California, according to a Washington Post report. Washington Post reported Saturday that the world's wealthiest individual was almost certainly working in the US without correct authorisation for a period in 1995 after he dropped out of Stanford University to work on his debut company, Zip2, which sold for about $300m four years later. *—The Guardian*

'VOTER MANIPULATION'

Republic of Georgia's ruling party claims election victory

This win is significant in the political landscape considered one of the most significant as well as one of the most divisive *PHOTO: X@DD_GEOPOLITICS*

TBILISI, 27 OCT

Ruling Georgian Dream Party has claimed victory in the elections by securing a majority of 53 per cent in electronic votes, as 90 per cent of the votes counted so far, as reported by Euro News on Sunday.

This win is significant in the political landscape of the South Caucasus nation of 3.7 million and was considered one of the most significant as well as one of the most divisive. The complete results, however, will be made public on Sunday morning after the votes cast using non-electronic means have been counted.

The four main opposition parties contesting the election--United National Movement, Strong Georgia, Coalition for Change, and Gakharia for Georgia--have alleged voter manipulation and fraud, as reported by Euro News.

The Opposition has also accused the ruling party of steering the nation away from the European Union and towards Russia. These claims were denied by Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze, who told Euronews, "We have no diplomatic relations with Russia,"

- Oppositions parties contesting the election--United National Movement, Strong Georgia, Coalition for Change, and Gakharia for Georgia--have alleged voter manipulation and fraud, as reported by Euro News

asserting that the party is dedicated to European integration.

Before the elections, the Georgian Dream Party had vowed to change the Constitution and to ban opposition parties if it secured 75 per cent of the seats in parliament. Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze, in an interview with Euro News, had called the elections "a referendum about the war and the peace issue," alluding to the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

150 representatives from 18 political parties are in the fray. If no party secures the 76 seats needed to form a government for a four-year term, the president will ask the party with the most seats to form a coalition. *—ANI*

PHOTO:X

Piramal Pharma deploying $85M capex: Chairperson

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

Piramal Pharma is utilising a capex of about USD 85 million for various initiatives, including capacity expansion, maintenance and de-bottlenecking of CDMO sites, in the current fiscal, according to its Chairperson Nandini Piramal. Mumbai-headquartered firm, which aims to cross USD 2 billion in revenue by FY30, has already invested around USD 30 million in the first half of the ongoing fiscal on the initiatives. "We expect the capex this year to be at a similar level as last year, which is about USD 85 million," Piramal told PTI in an interaction. A part of the capex is planned for the domestic market while some of it would also go into the US business, she added. The company last week reported over four-fold increase in consolidated net profit at Rs 23 crore for the second quarter ended September. *—PTI*

Hindustan Zinc to invest $2B to double production capacity

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

Vedanta Group firm Hindustan Zinc plans to pump in up to USD 2 billion (around Rs 17,000 crore) to double its production capacity to 2 million tonnes in the next few years, its CEO Arun Misra said. The company which had already engaged consultants to ramp up its capacity is looking for mining partners for the same, Misra told PTI. "We have a plan of doubling the production to 2 million tonnes... So, I am sure by the end of this quarter, we should be able to make project announcements, which projects, how much and where it is happening." he explained. The company is targetting a production capacity of 1.2 million tonnes (MT) in 2025, followed by 1.35 MT in 2026 and 1.8 MT in 2027, Misra said. The company on Friday reported a 34.5 per cent rise in consolidated net profit to Rs 2,327 crore for the quarter ended September 30, 2024, on the back of higher income.*—PTI*

SBI named Best Bank by Global Finance Magazine

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

State Bank of India (SBI) was recognised as the Best Bank in India for 2024 by Global Finance Magazine of the US at its 31st Annual Best Bank Awards event held during the sidelines of Annual Meetings of the IMF and the World Bank in Washington. SBI Chairman CS Setty received the award in recognition of the bank's unwavering commitment to providing exceptional services and promoting financial inclusion nationwide by winning the trust of its customers, the bank said in a statement. For decades, Global Finance's Best Bank Awards have set the trusted standard for evaluating the world's financial institutions, making them invaluable to corporate decision-makers, especially as the global economy faces significant challenges. *—PTI*

Govt plans to issue ALMM to push green energy

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

The government is planning to introduce an Approved List of Models and Manufacturers (ALMM) for solar cells on the lines of module manufacturing to boost India's transition towards green energy. The government is aiming to make the second list (List II) under the ALMM for solar PV cells effective 1 April, 2026. The government introduced the ALMM order (List I) in 2019 for solar modules to boost the manufacturing and usage of made-in-India solar panels. It was made mandatory to source PV modules from models and manufacturers included in the ALMM List I. *—PTI*

Mcap of 9 of top-10 firms drops Rs 2L cr as mkt falls

Last week, BSE benchmark tanked 1,822.46 pts or 2.24% ***PHOTO: PIXABAY***

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

Nine of the top-10 most valued firms together lost a whopping Rs 2,09,952.26 crore from market valuation last week, in line with weak trends in equities, with Hindustan Unilever and Reliance Industries Limited taking the biggest hit.

Last week, the BSE benchmark tanked 1,822.46 points or 2.24 per cent.

"The dismal Q2 earnings so far have aggravated the investors' woes while persistent FII selling continued to create havoc in the market," said Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd.

From the top-10 pack, HDFC Bank emerged as the only winner.

The market valuation of Hindustan Unilever eroded by Rs 44,195.81 crore to Rs 5,93,870.94 crore.

Reliance Industries' valuation tumbled Rs 41,994.54 crore to Rs 17,96,726.60 crore.

State Bank of India's market valuation plummeted by Rs 35,117.72 crore to Rs 6,96,655.84 crore, and that of Bharti Airtel tanked by Rs 24,108.72 crore to Rs 9,47,598.89 crore.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) dropped by Rs 23,137.67 crore to Rs 14,68,183.73 crore.

The valuation of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) diminished by Rs 19,797.24 crore to Rs 5,71,621.67 crore, and that of Infosys declined by Rs 10,629.49 crore to Rs 7,69,496.61 crore.

ITC's mcap fell by Rs 5,690.96 crore to Rs 6,02,991.33 crore, and that of ICICI Bank went lower by Rs 5,280.11 crore to Rs 8,84,911.27 crore.

However, the mcap of HDFC Bank jumped Rs 46,891.13 crore to Rs 13,29,739.43 crore.

Reliance Industries retained the title of the most valued firm, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, Infosys, State Bank of India, ITC, Hindustan Unilever and LIC. *—PTI*

- The dismal Q2 earnings so far have aggravated the investors' woes while persistent FII selling continued to create havoc in the market, according to experts

FPIs withdraw ₹85,790 crore from equities in October

In terms of outflows, Oct is one of the worst-ever months

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

Foreign investors have continued selling in the Indian market, pulling out a massive Rs 85,790 crore (around USD 10.2 billion) from equities this month due to Chinese stimulus measures, attractive stock valuations, and the elevated pricing of domestic equities.

October is turning into the worst-ever month in terms of foreign fund outflows. In March 2020, FPIs withdrew Rs 61,973 crore from equities.

The latest outflow came after a nine-month high investment of Rs 57,724 crore in September 2024.

Latest outflow came after a 9-month high of Rs 57,724 crore ***PHOTO: PTI***

Since June, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have consistently bought equities after withdrawing Rs 34,252 crore in April-May. Overall, FPIs have been net buyers in 2024, except for January, April, and May, data with the depositories showed.

According to the data, FPIs made a net withdrawal of Rs 85,790 crore from equities between 1 and 25 October.

The sustained FPI selling impacted market sentiments, pulling the NSE's benchmark index Nifty down by 8 per cent from the peak.

In addition, FPIs pulled out Rs 5,008 crore from the debt general limit and invested Rs 410 crore from the debt Voluntary Retention Route (VRR) during the period under review.

So far this year, FPIs invested Rs 14,820 crore in equities and Rs 1.05 lakh crore in the debt market. *—PTI*

FSSAI is a pro-active industry with fast responses: Nestle

SAMALKHA, 27 OCT

There has been a dramatic change in the tone and tenor of FSSAI, and the Indian food regulator has now become more pro-active and industry-centred with fast responses in the last decade, said Nestle India Chairman and Managing Director Suresh Narayanan.

Moreover, with the setting of more NABL-accredited laboratories by different leaders of FSSAI, the credibility of the testing process has also increased, said Narayanan, who led Nestle India after the Maggi crisis, which unfolded almost a decade back.

In June 2015, FSSAI banned Maggi noodles for allegedly containing lead beyond permissible limits, forcing the company to withdraw the product from the market.

PHOTO: PTI

Nestle India relaunched Maggi in November 2015 after the ban was lifted and again got its pole position in the fast-growing instant noodles segment, where it still dominates with over 60 per cent market share.

Nestle has sold over six billion servings of Maggi, making India the largest market for Maggi worldwide, the company disclosed in its latest annual report earlier this year.

Even earlier this year in April, FSSAI had collected pan-India samples of Nestle's Cerelac baby cereals amid a global report, claiming the company was adding higher sugar content to the product.

These allegations were contested by Nestle, which earlier this week launched a new range of 14 variants of its 50-year-old infant food brand Cerelac in India.

FSSAI ban was stayed by the Bombay High Court over the petition filed by Nestle India.

Later, in April 2024, the apex consumer forum body NCDRC dismissed the petition filed by the government, seeking damages of Rs 640 crore from Nestle over the Maggi issues. *—PTI*

Swiggy's IPO on 6 Nov, $11.2B valuation target

Swiggy is set to debut its IPO on 6 November, targeting a valuation of $11.2 billion. The Rs 11,300 crore IPO, one of India's largest this year, includes a Rs 6,800 crore secondary share sale by existing investors like Accel, Elevation Capital, and Norwest Venture Partners, along with a Rs 4,500 crore primary capital raise. Through the IPO, Swiggy's founders Sriharsha Majety, Rahul Jaimini and Nandan Reddy are also partially selling their stakes. Initially, Swiggy was set to raise Rs 3,750 crore in primary capital but secured an approval from its shareholders in October. *—Agencies*

FOR INDIAN MILITARY

US, France, Armenia are top 3 defence export customers

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

Amid a growing push to increase export of indigenous defence equipment, the US, France and Armenia have emerged as the top three customers for Indian military exports.

"India is presently exporting military equipment to more than 100 nations across the world. The top three countries in the last financial year include the US, France and Armenia, official sources said on Sunday.

The sources said the exports to the US include a significant number of parts of aircraft and helicopters manufactured by Indian firms for global defence majors like Lockheed Martin and Boeing.

The exports to France include a lot of software and electronic equipment while the exports to Armenia include ATAGS artillery guns, Pinaka multi-barrel rocket launcher systems, Swathi weapon locating radars and other important systems.

Official sources said that the Defence Industrial Base has been expanding with the presence of 16 Defence public sector units, 430 firms with licenses along 16000 medium and small-scale enterprises.

Sources said the value of defence production in the country has gone up significantly since 2014-15.

The contribution of the private sector in this value of production is 21 per cent. The major defence platforms produced in the Country include the LCA Tejas fighter jets, aircraft carriers, warships, submarines, Dhanush Artillery Gun system, MBT Arjun, Advanced towed artillery gun system Light Specialist Vehicles etc... *—ANI*

Business cycle funds deliver 56% returns

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

Business cycle mutual funds have been gaining traction in the investment landscape, delivering robust returns of 32-56 per cent over the past year, with schemes from HSBC, Mahindra Manulife, and Quant generating returns exceeding 50 per cent.

These top three funds have substantially outperformed the Nifty 500 TRI index, which delivered 35.11 per cent returns over the same period, according to the industry data.

Currently, the market hosts only 16 business cycle funds, with just three completing a three-year tenure. The category's assets under management (AUM) have surged to Rs 37,487 crore, more than doubling from Rs 17,238 crore in September 2021.

Of the 16 business cycle funds currently available, 10 MFs have a track record of over a year, and all but one have outperformed the Nifty 500 TRI over the past 12 months. These 10 funds have given an average return of 42 per cent, according to industry data. Moreover, the top three funds have outperformed the Nifty 500 TRI index, which gave 15.2 per cent returns. *—PTI*

Macrotech to launch projects worth ₹10K cr

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

Realty firm Macrotech Developers Ltd will launch nearly 8 million square feet of residential space in the second half of this fiscal with an estimated sales value of Rs 10,000 crore, as part of its strategy to expand the business.

Mumbai-based Macrotech Developers sells properties under the Lodha brand.

In its latest investors presentation, Macrotech Developers said it has launched a 3.6 million square feet area during the April-September period of this fiscal, with an estimated sales bookings potential of Rs 6,130 crore.

These projects will be launched in Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), Pune and Bengaluru where the company has a significant presence.

Earlier this month, Macrotech Developers reported a 21 per cent increase in sales bookings to a record Rs 4,290 crore during the July-September period on better housing demand. *—PTI*

PANEL'S OPINION

'ONGC head should be chairman of HPCL'

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

The oil and Natural Gas Corporation Chairman and Managing Director should also be the chair of the firm's subsidiary Hindustan Petroleum Corporation in line with the universal practice of a corporate group having only one chairman, a panel appointed to work out synergies between the two firms said in its report.

India's top oil and gas producer Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) had, in January 2018, bought the government's entire 51.11 per cent stake in HPCL for Rs 36,915 crore. The nation's third-biggest oil refining and fuel marketing company thereafter became a subsidiary of ONGC.

PHOTO: PTI

But Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL), which initially did not even recognise the new owner, continues to be headed by a chairman and managing director, who does not report to parent firm ONGC or its board. ONGC has got just one board position on HPCL following the acquisition.

On a prod from the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, ONGC appointed a three-member panel to work out synergies between ONGC and HPCL

Sources said the ONGC-HPCL synergy panel was of the view that there cannot be two chairmen within a group, and the holding company chairman should sit on board of all its subsidiaries. *—PTI*

FII activities, trends key drivers for mkt this week

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

Equity investors will track the trading activity of foreign investors, global trends and ongoing earnings results for further cues, and benchmark indices may continue to witness consolidation in a holiday-shortened week amid the monthly derivatives expiry, analysts said. Markets fell sharply last week amid massive foreign capital outflows and dismal Q2 earnings so far.

Weakness in markets might continue in the near term ahead of the US polls. *—PTI*

OSWAL'S OBSERVATION

Silver set to outshine gold with ₹1.25L target

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

The performance of silver could either match or outperform gold in the medium to long term, as silver prices is expected to reach Rs 1,25,000 per kilogram on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) and USD 40 per ounce on the COMEX within the next 12 to 15 months, the Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd (MOFSL) said.

Silver has shown impressive growth in 2024, recording gains of over 40 per cent year-to-date and surpassing the Rs 100,000 mark domestically, driven by safe-haven demand and robust industrial usage.

The financial services firm further anticipated that the gold prices will reach Rs 81,000 per 10 grams in the medium term and Rs 86,000 in the long term.

Silver has shown impressive growth in 2024, recording gains of over 40 per cent year-to-date and surpassing the Rs 1,00,000 mark ***PHOTO: FREEPIK***

On the COMEX, gold is expected to hit USD 2,830 in the medium term and USD 3,000 in the long term, it added.

Gold has consistently been one of the best-performing assets in recent years - barring 2021, as the yellow metal has closed in the green on the domestic front since 2016.

This year, gold prices have surged to record highs on both the COMEX and domestic markets, yielding over 30 per cent growth year-to-date.

However, it noted that the recent concerns over rising prices could dampen overall demand and domestic demand may experience a slight dip, prices could still find support amid these major events.

According to MOFSL analysis of leap years and historical patterns of Gold, since 2011, there have only been two instances (2015 and 2016) where the 30 days leading up to Diwali recorded negative returns. Aside from 2022, pre-Diwali gains have consistently outpaced post-Diwali gains. *—ANI*

Appliance makers expect 30% growth amid festival

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

The appliance & consumer electronics industry expects around 30 per cent growth in the festive season sales this year after a double-digit booster from online sale events of leading etailers Flipkart and Amazon and an expected final thrust from offline channels during Dhanteras week.

This festive season, premiumisation is the flavour, where consumers are willing to pay extra for features such as energy efficiency, higher capacity and larger size and even showing interest in the high-end AI & IOT Technology-driven products.

Companies such as LG Electronics, Panasonic, Sony, Godrej Appliances and Haier started festive sales with a good kick start from the Onam festival and expect to continue the momentum till the remaining week of the nearly 45-day festive period, which concludes after Diwali.

To make the premium range as large screen TV panels above 51' screen size, higher load capacity washing machines and French door refrigerators (with two side-by-side doors), the manufacturers are incentivising with attractive financing schemes, investing in branding and promotion on digital and traditional mediums.

Over festive season sales on e-commerce platforms such as Amazon and Flipkart, Nandi said Godrej Appliances has overall "achieved an 70 per cent-plus growth compared to last year". *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Rizwan named Pakistan's new white-ball captain

LAHORE, 27 OCT

Wicketkeeper-batter Muhammad Rizwan was on Sunday named Pakistan's ODI and T20 captain, replacing Babar Azam, as the selectors announced the squads for the white-ball tours of Australia and Zimbabwe beginning 4 November. Salman Ali Agha was made vice-captain for all future ODI and T20 international assignments. Pakistan will play three ODIs and as many T20Is in their Australia tour, beginning with the first match in Melbourne on 4 November, and that will be Rizwan's first assignment as captain. Agha will lead the T20I side in Zimbabwe as Rizwan is rested under a workload management plan, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said in a statement. Pakistan's tour of Zimbabwe -- for three ODIs and three T20Is -- is from 24 November to 5 December. The first match -- an ODI -- will be played in Bulawayo. Babar, pacers Shaheen Shah Afridi and Naseem Shah returned to the Pakistan team for the Australia tour after being sidelined for two Tests against England. —*PTI*

Modi hails Arjun crossing 2,800 mark in live chess ratings

NEW DELHI, 27 OCT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday hailed as a "phenomenal feat" Arjun Erigaisi crossing the 2800 mark in live chess ratings, saying that in addition to being a great personal milestone, it will also inspire many more youngsters to play chess and shine on the global stage. Erigaisi became only the second Indian player to cross the 2800 mark, after five-time world champion Viswanathan Anand. The 2,800 club is a rarefied one. Only 14 players in history have crossed 2800 Elo in published ratings. "Congratulations to Arjun Erigaisi for crossing the 2800 mark in live chess ratings! This is a phenomenal feat. His exceptional talent and perseverance make our entire nation proud," Modi said in a post on X. —*PTI*

Echavarria claims Zozo C'ship for his 2nd victory

INZAI CITY, 27 OCT

Nico Echavarria claimed the Zozo Championship for his second PGA Tour victory, shooting 3-under 67 on Sunday to win by a shot over Max Greyserman and Justin Thomas. Echavarria, a Colombian who played at the University of Arkansas, birdied two of the final three holes — including the 18th — to add to the title he won last year at the Puerto Rico Open. Thomas, who played in the final three-some with Greyserman and Echavarria, closed with a 66. He is trying to win his first PGA title in 2 & 1/2 years. His last was the 2022 PGA Championship, which gave him 15 PGA titles.—*PTI*

Benson, Reena win Kochi Spice Coast Marathon

KOCHI, 27 OCT

Kerala's CB Benson and Reena Manohar bagged the men's and women's title respectively in the Kochi Spice Coast Marathon 2024 here on Sunday. Benson, comfortably tackled the 42.2 kilometres in 3:00:42. It was third time lucky for him after finishing second in the previous two editions. Justin (03:06:56) and Sreenidhi Sreekumar (03:08:49) grabbed the second and third positions. Reena did the star turn among women, covering the same distance in 04:50:06. Mary Joshy (04:53:59) and Nileena Babu (04:54:32) took the second and third spot. "I am delighted to see so many running enthusiasts turn up early in the morning," said cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar, brand ambassador of the event. —*PTI*

BARCELONA ROUT REAL MADRID 4-0

Lewandowski, Yamal spoil Mbappé's first Clasico

Raphania, Lewandowski and Yamal celebrate the third goal against Real Madrid on Sunday
PHOTO: X/@FCBARCELONA

BARCELONA, 27 OCT

Robert Lewandowski scored twice and Lamine Yamal piled on to ruin Kylian Mbappé's first clasico as Barcelona routed Real Madrid 4-0.The lopsided victory in Spain's capital ended the host's unbeaten run in La Liga at 42 games, one shy of Barcelona's record streak in 2017-18. Carlo Ancelotti's side suffered its first loss since Sept. 23 last year. And what a loss it was. Lewandowski got the visitors going from a superb pass by Barcelona's latest youth talent Marc Casadó in the 54th minute and rose up to head in a fine header three minutes later to silence Santiago Bernabeu Stadium.

Yamal made it a rout in the 77th when the teenage phenom rifled a shot from an angle over goalkeeper Andriy Lunin. That goal made him the youngest scorer in a clasico at 17 years, 105 days, surpassing teammate Ansu Fati, who was about 250 days older in October 2020.

Raphinha then broke free with Madrid completely unhinged and chipped Lunin in the 84th. The win came three days after Barcelona thumped Bayern Munich 4-1 in the Champions League. It has outscored its last five opponents 21-2.

It is an understatement that Mbappé had a frustrating first game against Barcelona in a white shirt. The France star was caught eight times offside by Barcelona's synchronised back four and failed to beat second-choice goalkeeper Iñaki Peña one-on-one with his team down two goals.

Hansi Flick, meanwhile, had a night to remember in the first clasico for the German coach.

After opening a six-point lead over Madrid at the top of La Liga, it is no longer a foregone conclusion that with Mbappé on board Madrid will waltz to a second straight domestic title.

Casadó had flashes of the flawless ball control of a Sergi Busquets as he helped compensate for Madrid's extra man in the midfield before he cued up the game-changing pass to play Lewandowski clear to slot home. Yamal upstaged Mbappé this summer when Spain beat France en route to winning the European Championship, and he did it again. To top it off, he scored with his supposedly "not as good" right foot before flashing his new braces decorated with Barcelona's colors for the cameras.

—*PTI*

DORTMUND SLUMP TO ANOTHER LOSS AT AUGSBURG

DORTMUND, 27 OCT

Borussia Dortmund's awful away form continued in a 2-1 loss to Augsburg in the Bundesliga that increases the pressure on coach Nuri Sahin.

Dortmund's fourth loss in a row in away games in all competitions — including 5-2 at Real Madrid on Tuesday — left the team seven points off new Bundesliga leader Leipzig.

The team's poor form has key players and sporting director Sebastian Kehl at a loss. "I'm annoyed by the many goals we're conceding," Kehl said. "We've been addressing this intensively but now we're standing here having to explain things that I can't explain."

Alexis Claude-Maurice made his first start since joining Augsburg in August and rewarded his new team with two goals from distance to turn the game around. Dortmund led with an early Donyell Malen goal.

The game ended with 18-year-old Dortmund defender Almugera Kabar sent off for two yellow cards on his Bundesliga debut. American forward Cole Campbell also debuted.

Sahin, who took over after Edin Terzic left following Dortmund's Champions League final loss last season, already faced scrutiny of his tactics last week after Dortmund gave up a two-goal lead in the loss at Madrid. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

New Zealand players celebrate after winning the second ODI match against India on Sunday, in Gujarat
PHOTO: X/ @WHITE_FERNS

White Ferns win by 76 runs against India in 2nd ODI

AHMEDABAD, 27 OCT

Indian batters flattered to deceive as skipper Sophie Devine's all-round heroics propelled New Zealand to a series-levelling 76-run win in the second women's ODI here on Sunday.

Opting to bat, Devine struck 79 off 86, striking seven fours and a six while stitching a vital partnership of 82 runs for the fifth wicket with Maddy Green (42 off 41 balls) to lift New Zealand to a challenging 259 for nine.

Devine also excelled with the ball, finishing with figures of 3/27 as New Zealand's bowlers combined to dismiss India for 183 runs, built around No. 9 Radha Yadav's fighting 48. For the White Ferns, Lea Tahuhu (3/42) also claimed three wickets, while Jess Kerr (2/49) and Eden Carson (2/32) also chipped in with key dismissals.

Chasing the target, India found themselves at 26 for 3 within the first five overs. They further slipped to 102 for 7 in 26 over when Radha and Saima Thakor (29) forged a spirited 70-run stand for the ninth wicket to keep alive slim hopes of .

However, Kerr broke the partnership removing Thakor as the hosts were eventually dismissed in 47.1 overs, allowing New Zealand to level the series at 1-1. Smriti Mandhana's struggles continued as she lasted just two balls, dismissed by Tahuhu, while fellow opener Shafali Verma (11) managed two boundaries before being adjudged LBW by Kerr. Yastika Bhatia (12) also fell early, becoming Tahuhu's second victim as India's top order faltered.

Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur, returning after missing the first ODI due to a minor injury, contributed 24 runs, as she partnered with Jemimah Rodrigues (17) to add 38 runs before both were dismissed. —*PTI*

BEATS MARTIN

Bagnaia wins Thailand MotoGP

BANGKOK, 27 OCT

Ducati's Francesco Bagnaia put in a sure-footed display at a rain-drenched Buriram International Circuit as he romped to victory in the Thailand Grand Prix on Sunday and slashed his gap to Jorge Martín, the championship leader, down to 17 points.

Bagnaia, the defending MotoGP champion, took advantage of errors by Pramac Racing's Martín and Marc Márquez of Gresini Racing to take the chequered flag and clinch his ninth win of the season. Martín finished second while the GasGas Tech3 rookie Pedro Acosta was third.

"This morning after the warm-up, I wasn't that happy, but I want to say thanks to my team," Bagnaia said. "We looked at the data, we understood what to do. There was more water on the asphalt and it was better for me. I'm so, so happy." Martín's second-place finish moves him up to 453 points while Bagnaia is second in the standings on 436, with two races left – in Sepang next weekend and Valencia a fortnight later. Italian Bagnaia began the race in pole but Martín took the lead heading into turn one with a trademark rocket start. —*The Guardian*

Bagnaia PHOTO: X/@ducaticorse

Yin Ruoning of China wins LPGA Tour's Maybank C'ship

KUALA LUMPUR, 27 OCT

Starting her final round in a three-way tie for the lead, Yin Ruoning shot a 7-under 65 on Sunday to win the LPGA Tour's Maybank Championship in Malaysia by one stroke for her second title this month.

Yin of China finished at 23-under 265 after a safe two-putt on the final hole held off Thai player Jeeno Thitikul (66), who was also runner-up at last year's event after losing the second-longest play-off in LPA Tour history.

Yin had a dominant 6-shot win at LPGA Shanghai earlier this month and also won the 2024 Dow Championship in June, where she partnered with Thitikul. "I had such great year last year I was wondering if I can win again, what if I can't, such things," Yin said. "But, I think I just really learned that I just need to enjoy myself out here and have fun, happy, so that's what I do."

PHOTO: PTI

South Korea's Haeran Ryu shot a 67 and was two shots behind Yin. American Bailey Tardy, who hit the round's equal best of 65, and second-round leader Maja Stark (70) of Sweden were tied for fourth at 16-under 272.

Hannah Green, who earned her third victory of 2024 and sixth of her career last week in South Korea, also carded a 65 to finish sixth at 15-under 273. She was tied with American Marina Alex (69), Hsu Wei-Ling (68) and Choi Hye-Jin (66). —*PTI*

Mumbai's batter plays a shot on the second day of a Ranji Trophy cricket match between Tripura and Mumbai
PHOTO: PTI

J&K beat Services by an innings & 25 runs

SRINAGAR, 27 OCT

Pacer Umar Nazir Mir starred with a six-wicket haul as Jammu and Kashmir secured their first win of the ongoing Ranji Trophy, defeating Services by an innings and 25 runs in a Group A match to take the second place in the points table.

Mir's exceptional bowling performance yielded figures of 12-1-53-6, helping dismiss Services for just 132 runs in 32 overs after J&K had posted 228 in their first innings.

Yudhvir Singh Charak also shone with the ball, claiming five wickets in the first innings (5/29) and adding three more (3/35) in the second, finishing with a match haul of eight wickets. He was adjudged the Player of the match as J & K wrapped up the game in just two days. Resuming their innings at 183 for 7, J&K added 45 runs to grab a lead of 157. For Services, only Shubham Rohilla (47), Jayant Goyat (27), and Arun Kumar (20) managed to reach double digits.

Mumbai in driver's seat against Tripura

In Agartala, defending champions Mumbai took control, amassing a solid 450 in their first innings against Tripura, bolstered by impressive fifties from late-order batsmen -- Shams Mulani (71), Himanshu Singh (59), and Shardul Thakur (62).

At stumps, Tripura were 60 for 1 in response, with Jiwanjot Singh (39) and Parvez Sultan (1) at the crease. Resuming at 248 for 6, Mulani and Himanshu added 61 runs before Mulani was trapped LBW by Manisankar Murasingh (3/117). —*PTI*

Umar Nazir PHOTO: FACEBOOK

- Pacer Umar Nazir Mir starred with a six-wicket haul as Jammu and Kashmir secured their first win of the ongoing Ranji Trophy

Topuria retains featherweight title

NEW YORK, 27 OCT

Champion Ilia Topuria overcame early adversity to score a thunderous third-round knockout victory over Hawaii's Max Holloway to retain the UFC featherweight title at UFC 308 at the Etihad Arena in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

The 27-year-old Topuria scored an early takedown but struggled to manage the distance through the first two frames of an intriguing title fight. Once he figured it out, the writing was on the wall for his opponent.

Holloway, who defeated Jose Aldo to become undisputed featherweight champ in June 2017 but lost the belt in December 2019, used his dizzying array of strikes to keep his Georgian-born opponent at bay, but Topuria's piston-like right hand was a threat throughout on Saturday night.

That right hand was what started Holloway's demise, but it was a follow-up short left that sent Holloway crashing to the canvas and then Topuria quickly followed him to the ground, raining down blows before referee Marc Goddard jumped in to stop the fight.

"With that right hand, I felt it. I just saw it with him, in his face, he started making some steps back, and you don't see that often with Max," Topuria said, paying tribute to his opponent as Holloway suffered the first knockout loss of his UFC tenure. Chimaev win sets up potential title fight with Du Plessis In the co-main event, undefeated Chechen Khamzat Chimaev put on another dominant grappling display before submitting former champ Robert Whittaker in the first round of their middleweight contest. —*Al Jazeera*

27-year-Ilia old Topuria scores an early takedown against Hawaii's Max Holloway on Sunday
PHOTO: CHRIS UNGER/ZUFFA LLC

Lewis ton powers WI to consolation ODI win against SL

PALLEKELE, 27 OCT

Evin Lewis' unbeaten 102 steered West Indies to a consolation victory against series winner Sri Lanka in the third and last one-day cricket international. Lewis, playing his first ODI since 2021, hit a straight six to bring up the winning runs and his fifth ODI century off 61 balls. The opener played through even after rolling his left ankle on 51. The West Indies reached 196-2 in reply to Sri Lanka's 156-3 after a five-hour rain delay reduced the match to 23 overs per side at Pallekele International Stadium.

Pathum Nissanka, dropped before he scored and on 17, and Avishka Fernando, also dropped, opened with an 81-run stand in 17 overs for Sri Lanka followed by the rain delay. —*PTI*

JAPAN PARA BADMINTON INT'L

Sivarajan, Sukant shine as India wins 24 medals

TOKYO, 27 OCT

Sivarajan Solaimalai and Sukant Kadam delivered standout performances, helping India win an impressive 24 medals at the Japan Para Badminton International on Sunday.

India won six gold, nine silver and as many bronze medals in the tournament. Sivarajan enjoyed a double victory, clinching gold in the men's singles SH6 class and partnering with Sudarsan Saravanakumar Muthusamy to win the top prize in men's doubles.

Sukant also excelled, taking gold in men's singles (SL4) and silver in men's doubles (SL3-SL4) with partner Dinesh Rajaiah. He triumphed over fellow Indian Tarun in a thrilling singles final, winning 21-12, 21-10, while Naveen Sivakumar and Surya Kant Yadav secured bronze medals. In the doubles final, Sukant and Dinesh fought valiantly but fell short against compatriots Umesh Vikram Kumar and Surya Kant Yadav, losing 5-21, 22-20, 16-21 to take home silver.

"Winning gold in singles and silver in doubles is incredibly special," Sukant said in a release.

"I thank my coaches, support team, and the entire para-badminton community for their unwavering support. This victory fuels my motivation to keep pushing boundaries." In other events, reigning Paralympic champion Kumar Nitesh claimed silver after a close match against Japan's Daisuke Fujihara, losing 16-21, 21-18, 19-21 in the SL3 finals.

In women's SU5, Manisha Ramdass captured gold by defeating Japan's Mamiko Toyoda 21-12, 21-18, while Neeraj settled for silver in the women's SL3 category after falling to Coraline Bergeron. Neeraj also finished second in mixed doubles with Surya Kant Yadav in the SL3-SU5 category.

In men's doubles SU5, Hardik Makkar and Ruthick Ragupati won gold, while Dev Rathi and Indonesia's Bartlomiej Mroz secured silver. Hardik and Ruthick also earned silver and bronze in men's singles SU5. —*PTI*